And Then There Were None... **a story by Isaac Babel**

DISSENT

Henry Pachter
WHAT IS HAPPENING IN CHINA?

M. Vincent Miller
WORKERS ON THE FARM
California Grape Pickers Organize

Béla Király
FROM DEATH TO REVOLUTION
A Memoir of the Hungarian Revolution

Richard Flacks
ON "PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY"

Michael Walzer, David Spitz
TOLERANCE, FREEDOM, SOCIALISM

Michael Harrington
THE TRADITION OF DISSENT

BACKGROUND TO VIETNAM
A Political Retrospect — **Irving Howe**
Pages from Its History — **Joseph Buttinger**

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1966 75c.

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DISSENT issued November 1, 1966, is published bi-monthly, January-February, March-April, May-June, July-August, September-October, November-December, by Dissent Publishing Association, 509 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017. Subscriptions: $4.50 for one year; $7.00 for two years; $3.50 for students for one year; foreign subscriptions, including Canada, add $1.00 mailing costs per year. All payments from foreign countries must be made by United States money orders or checks payable in United States currency. Single copy, 75 cents. For special rates on bulk orders from organizations, teachers, etc., write directly to DISSENT. For information on newsstand and bookstore distribution write to: Eastern News Co., 225 Seventh Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10001.

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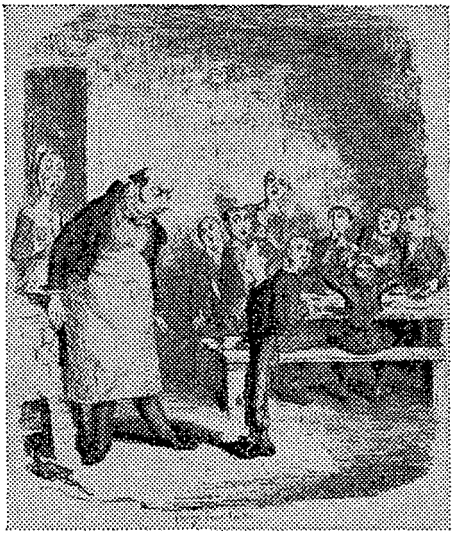

George Cruikshank

Oliver Asks for More

The board were sitting in solemn conclave, when Mr. Bumble rushed into the room in great excitement and . . . said.

"Mr. Limbkins, I beg your pardon, sir! Oliver Twist has asked for more!"

There was a general start. Horror was depicted in every countenance.

"That boy will be hung," said the gentleman in the white waistcoat. "I know that boy will be hung."

It has by now become a custom—it's also an absolute necessity—that every two years we ask our readers for financial help. This time, for "more."

The reasons are clear: we became a bi-monthly in 1966, thereby increasing our costs considerably; the inflationary pinch has further contributed to that increase.

Becoming a bi-monthly was a calculated risk. We are glad we took it. Our political influence has widened noticeably. Our circulation has increased by some 25%.

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The economics of a little magazine resemble the economics of an underdeveloped country. There is never enough capital to reach the point of self-sufficiency.

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A scatter of ten-dollars bills (while intensely desirable) is not enough. We must have pledges in larger sums, in three figures.

In three figures—over a two-year period, payable between now and November 1968. Cash is nice.

The editors, in addition to giving their time and labor, are again pledging large sums—mostly in three figures. We believe we have earned the right to say to our friends: this project means enough to all of us so that you must help.

And when you help—a little "more," please.

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Michael Harrington

THE TRADITION OF DISSENT

The following article was written as the Introduction to Critics and Rebels, *an anthology of articles taken from the past twelve years of* Dissent. Critics and Rebels *will be published by New American Library in the spring of 1967. Meanwhile we print Michael Harrington's article not merely for its intrinsic interest but also—to be candid—in the hope that it will lead our readers to pay greater attention to the matter on the preceding page.*—Ed.

I had begun this introduction as an analysis of the relationship between Dissent and the times which the articles in this volume both depict and reflect. More or less inevitably, this led to a consideration of the revival of American radicalism in the sixties, and one more essay on the gap between the generations of the Left began to emerge. It occurred to me that America could do without another such analysis—there are entire books devoted to the subject—and it was this realization which impelled me toward a rather novel form for a preface, mixing politics and memoir.

I did not choose this approach in order to be a *laudator prius acti* and I hope that I am not pretentiously investing my own experience with large socio-symbolic significance. It is just that a brief account of my own experience with the magazine might help in a small way to give a perspective on its role and importance for the democratic Left. If that can be achieved, it might provide a vantage point from which the reader can hear the individual contributors speak for themselves more clearly.

My first reaction to the magazine—it was the period when it was founded—was that the editors were selling out.

Perhaps it is inevitable that young people come to the radical movement with the fervor of cathechumens and always believe that the veterans of past struggles are tired and going soft. Or perhaps this attitude is only an expression of the special American circumstances of the recent past: the decline and ideological confusion of the entire adult Left; the discontinuities created when McCarthyism all but wiped out the

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radical youth movement. Whatever the sociological and psychological explanation, it seemed obvious to me in 1954 that Irving Howe and company were hell-bent for liberalism, a fate worse than death. At DISSENT conferences, I was among those who lectured the editors of the magazine on the dangers of capitulating to American imperialism, of abandoning the struggle for socialist power, and so on.

It is obvious that I do not bring up this reminiscence in order to document that cruel untruth which the middle class loves so well: that a twenty-year-old cares about poverty and injustice but a thirty-year-old does not. Quite the contrary, DISSENT, as this collection amply demonstrates, has maintained a basically critical stance toward the American and world status quo for more than a decade. And if my own view of the universe is more complex than the one I used to urge at the DISSENT conferences, it is animated by the same spirit.

For what I had regarded as "selling out" was a profoundly radical act. By the 1950's the classic socialist dogmas had all become problematic. In the East, the hopes of October, 1917, had been destroyed by Stalinist totalitarianism. In Western Europe, Social Democracy had begun to accept the welfare state as a substitute for socialism. Under such circumstances, it was possible to incant the old truths although they no longer applied (they did, however, still sound intransigent and pure, which was their attraction for me at that time), or to strike out in search of a new relevance. And it was, of course, the latter and liberating course which DISSENT took.

At the same time, the question of civil liberties had an extraordinary depth and range. For, as often happens, a profound change in attitudes was debated in symbolic terms. There were not a great many proclaimed Communists clamoring for the right to teach, and even the infamous Smith Act persecutions affected a much smaller group than the Palmer Raids of the Twenties. Yet, there was fierce, even passionate, argument over such issues. And in general, those who said that Communists had—because they were conspirators or accomplices in subversion, or whatever—forfeited their democratic rights to be hired as teachers or to apologize for totalitarianism without fear of reprisal, also began to affirm that America was a fine society with only vestigal social problems. And those who, like DISSENT, maintained a principled defense of the rights of Communists kept up their attack on domestic injustice.

These internal wrongs in American society were usually seen in DISSENT as related to a foreign policy which included Chiang, Franco, Syngman Rhee, Bao Dai (and Diem and Ky), Batista, Jiminez, etc., in the "free" world. An America which still believed in laissez faire myths

(Continued on page 749)

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With this collection of provocative essays, Irving Howe, teacher, editor, author and critic scrutinizes some of the dilemmas of our time. The experiences examined range from the McCarthy years through the crisis in Vietnam and include portraits of Trotsky, Pasternak, Stevenson, Kennedy and Johnson—the result is a brilliant and challenging book which clarifies the radical position.

Irving Howe

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DISSENT

NOVEMBER–DECEMBER 1966

COMMENTS AND OPINIONS

Tribute to a Brave Man—*by B. R.* 632
What Is Happening in China?—*by Henry Pachter* 633
SNCC in Trouble: A Report from Atlanta—*by Pat Watters*.. 639
Where Is "The Movement" Now? An Interview with James Farmer—*by Stanley Plastrik* 642

ARTICLES

The Tradition of Dissent—*by Michael Harrington* 627
Workers on the Farm: After the Grape Pickers' Strike —*by M. Vincent Miller* 645
And Then There Were None . . .—*a story by Isaac Babel* 656
Background on Vietnam
The Politics of Disaster—*by Irving Howe* 660
Three Pages from Vietnamese History—*by Joseph Buttinger* 676
Administrative Liberalism and the War on Poverty —*by Joseph Bensman and Bernard Rosenberg* 691
Notebook
Portrait of a Turncoat—*by David Evanier* 696
Napalm Bombs in Redwood City—*by Adam Hochschild* 698
On the Uses of Participatory Democracy—*by Richard Flacks* 701
From Death to Revolution: A Memoir from the Hungarian Revolution—*by Béla Király* 709

COMMUNICATIONS

On the Nature of Freedom—*by Michael Walzer* 725
The Pleasures of Misunderstanding Freedom—*by David Spitz* 729

BOOKS

A Century of Dishonor (The Petitioners: The Story of the Supreme Court of the United States and the Negro, by Loren Miller)—*reviewed by Howard N. Meyer* 740
On Legal Abuses of Psychiatry (Psychiatric Justice, by Thomas S. Szasz)—*reviewed by Edward A. Volkman* 742
Marxism: An End to Revolution (Marxism in Modern France, by George Lichtheim)—*reviewed by Robert L. Hoffman*..... 745

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DISSENT is a journal devoted to the ideas and values of democratic socialism. It seeks to serve as a forum for writers devoted to these ideas and values, while also welcoming a wide variety of other opinions. Each writer speaks for himself; there is no effort made to exact editorial consensus or uniformity.

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A BI-MONTHLY OF SOCIALIST OPINION

A Tribute to a Brave Man

Those who do not know the name Mihajlov, will have to conjure with it before long. Not since Milovan Djilas, a symbol of much that is best in politics, has a Yugoslav citizen asserted his humanity with such conviction and at such cost to himself. Mihajlov initially attracted attention with his book, *Moscow Summer,* a first-hand account of certain barbarities in contemporary Russia.

Tito, probably seeing too much of his own likeness in the portrait of another tyrant, cannot have been pleased. Mihajlov was arrested, reprimanded, and fired from his job. He had taken the first step on a long road likely to terminate in political martyrdom.

The second step should chasten everyone who is too easily consoled by the existence of Titoism and other such manifestations of polycentric unpredictability. In the spring of this year Mihajlov announced that he and his friends, in conformance with the Yugoslav "Constitution and the Law on the Press and other Information Media" would establish a *democratic socialist magazine* (words he italicized in his quixotic statement of purpose).

Next, the Western press reported that Mihajlov was under arrest in Zadar, accused of violating public order, for having called a conference to discuss the founding of his magazine.

The magazine was to have been called *Free Voice.* No such Voice will be heard in Tito's land this year. The would-be editor was dismissed, re-arrested, tried kangaroo-style, spat upon by hooligans who did not call themselves Red Guards, convicted and sentenced to one year in prison for "disseminating false information." In a way, he is guilty as charged, for Mihajlov did disseminate the false information that freedom was possible right now in Yugoslavia. If it ever is, we will have the likes of Mihajlo Mihajlov to thank! B. R.

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COMMENTS AND OPINIONS

Henry Pachter

What Is Happening in China?

The *Great Cultural Revolution* which vents its ire against capitalistic hairdos, blasphemous traffic lights, Western books, and revisionist street names baffles the old China hands in Moscow, Washington, and even Havana. What is the meaning of these youthful Red Guards who roam the streets and terrorize the workers even at the risk of production losses? And why do grown-up people declare that they can do their jobs and nurse their children better after reading Mao's works? The simplest answer to such questions, that Mao Tse-tung has gone mad or that he fears to lose his grip on the minds of his successors, eludes the real problem: how can a madman impose a dilettante philosophy on 700 million people whose main problem is simply survival? Does he not need the support of at least the 700,000 cadre Communists?

Some clever experts have tried to solve the riddle by comparing Mao with Hitler. The rampage of xenophobia, in their view, is nothing but preparation for total war; just as Hitler whipped up nationalism to a frenzy in order to make the Germans accept the sacrifices of soldiering, so Mao Tse-tung imposes a severe puritan regime on a nation that would like to have a little butter but must produce guns.

There are three variants of this theory. One, the Chinese command expects or fears that it might be drawn into the Vietnamese war; or it really believes its own propaganda that the American imperialists will attack the Chinese mainland. Two, Sino-Soviet relations are headed for a showdown, and the spectacle of an anti-revisionist revolution was merely staged to foreshadow the final break with Moscow. Three, the Chinese policy-makers really do not expect to be drawn into a major war in the near future; nor do they anticipate starting one; rather, they look forward to a period of revolutionary ebb, to the relaxation of tension between the powers and, instead of "protracted warfare," to protracted isolation.

Such a period of relative calm would obviously entail certain risks for a revolutionary party that always justifies its despotic rule by pointing to the danger abroad. It risks becoming superfluous, or, worse, losing its ardor. As a consequence, the country would lose the revolutionary impetus which is the only guarantee of external safety and internal stability for the regime. For all these reasons, and precisely *because* they expected a

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low tide of revolutionary wars, the policy-makers had to launch a campaign of revolutionary renewal, with old man Mao extending his hand across two generations to the young students, the future leaders of the seventies.

There is some truth in all these theories; but, conflicting as they are, they have two important drawbacks in common—they all start out with the foreign situation and work back into the home situation. This is contrary to every previous experience in totalitarian states—particularly in Communist dictatorships where policy is dominated by domestic problems. Secondly, they assume that the dictator (or directorate) is more or less free to manipulate and manage the course of events, unleashing and silencing currents of opinion at will, or creating ideologies as he sees fit. This assumption is unhistorical; it fails to recognize the pressures under which a totalitarian dictatorship must operate, particularly in a rapidly developing country. The Emperor of China, Hegel remarked, is the least free of all men; and the regime of Mao Tse-tung resembles most of all that of Shih Huang-ti (247–210 B.C.) in its savage drive to communize the villages, to extinguish traditional learning, to militarize the government, and to isolate the country behind huge concrete and ideological walls.

•

Commentators with a grasp of the inside news from China have studied the career of Lin Piao, heir apparent to Mao, chief not only of the defense establishment but, more important, of the internal security forces, and director of the political-military cadres which now operate inside all government departments. Lin Piao rose to power first as the representative of the Party in the army, and in this capacity he helped defeat the older and higher-ranking officers who wished to make the army into the most effective instrument of defense. Lin Piao, on the contrary, placed ideology above discipline, political awareness above military efficiency, and civilian activities above barracks drill. Under his guidance, with the full backing of Mao Tse-tung, the army entered into all areas, of economic construction, and Lin Piao gave its political cadres the right to criticize superior officers irrespective of rank. Thus he built his machine of security agents within the army and then used the army cadres as instruments to control other areas, notably the government and even the Party. It was Lin Piao who announced the theory of "revolutionary ebb," and under his direction Hsiao Hua (the security officer whom he fired last year) introduced the army ordinances of 1964, which stated that conditions have changed since the glorious civil war and that the military must now be organized for political purposes, to carry on the revolution at home. The two doctrines, that outside dangers are relatively remote and that the revolution must be carried forward at home, are complementary and, together with the fact that Lin Piao's power base is the army, they conjure up the possibility of Bonapartism.[1]

[1] The term Bonapartism seems to evoke not only militarism but belligerence. This is an optical illusion. Caesar reached for dictatorship after he had conquered Gaul; Napoleon I made himself consul for life after the peace of Amiens, and Napoleon III never expected to get into any war, except an easy campaign of "liberation."

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To understand this we must once more reach back into the treasure house of historical experience.

•

In parliamentary democracies, government crises result in pendulum swings from Right to Left and back again, whereby the ruling elites may coopt outsiders from time to time to enlarge the scope of government by consent while basically changing little in their composition. To a spectator they may seem to ride on a ferris wheel or (if one prefers a medieval simile) to be thrown up and cast down by a wheel of fortune.

In totalitarian states, crises produce a different pattern of personnel mobility; a pattern comparable to a contracting spiral which seems to vanish at the top and to be ever renewed at the bottom. The ruling party must of necessity delegate power to certain executive organs, and the party personnel that has to man these must of necessity take an interest in the efficiency of its own apparatus, in the services it renders, and even in the people whom it is to serve. The director of a factory may report that, while he supports the Plan 150%, his workers can fulfill it only by 50%. The leader of a farm district may argue that collectivization is right for the rest of the nation, but that in his district peasants will work their private plots more intensively than the Sovkhoz. Hence, we hear periodically of "bureaucrats" or "saboteurs" who are not willing or not able to execute the Party's commands.[2] If these "saboteurs" are actual bureaucrats, the Party apparatus is mobilized to substitute its energy and dynamism but, above all, its righteousness for their expertise. If they belong to the Party, they are called deviationists, and a more righteous or orthodox faction must take matters in hand. In either case, the regime loses the support of functionaries who have acted as transmission belts between policy-maker and people.

As a consequence, the regime may lose contact with the people at the other end of the transmission belt.

Either of two things may happen: The regime can transform itself, through successive purges of functionaries who have become too interested in doing their jobs, into a pure military or police dictatorship. Or, alternatively, the dictator may try to mobilize a new *levée en masse,* renewing the spiral from below by appealing to "the people" or perhaps to certain lower strata of the Party apparatus. A new wave of despotic or terroristic measures is launched to fulfill the tasks the bureaucrats were obviously unable to fulfill.

Such an appeal may be made either in the name of national defense—projecting an arch-enemy whose eternal threats or active measures of encirclement impose total mobilization on the beleaguered nation—or the appeal may be to the strengthening of the revolution. Or else, the dictator may call upon the good instincts of the people to correct the officials' corruption, so as to prevent the formation of a new ruling class, and not to allow any slacken-

[2] Professor Schurman, of the Berkeley Center for Chinese Studies, writes in a special issue of the *Diplomat,* September 1966: "Modern organization is so complex that often it is the office which makes the man. Thus, the political appointee sometimes becomes an advocate of that sector's interests, regardless of his higher political commitments."

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ing of revolutionary fervor, especially in the face of a worldwide conspiracy of revisionists and imperialists working together to subvert the "Motherland of the Revolution."

There are now enough historical examples to allow a fairly accurate description of this mechanism: the dictator, reaching out beyond the organized supports of power—such as the government or the Party—to the unorganized masses, tries to identify their apocalyptic visions with his own political aims; he institutes mass terror against the middle strata of society and organizes new instruments of power which allow him to prolong his own technique of despotic rule. In the name of preventing a Thermidor, he stages a travesty of the Permanent Revolution by shifting the real seat of power from one apparatus which has become too legalistic and bureaucratic, to another which knows no limits.

Karl Marx first analyzed this phenomenon. He knew it as "Caesarism" or "Bonapartism"; but he might as well have enumerated other historical examples such as the Condottiere of Renaissance Italy and above all the popular-plus-police regime of the Medici in Florence. In our time we have seen it develop in Mussolini's repeated "changes of the guard," in Hitler's cold purges of the professionals, and repeatedly in the Soviet Union. When Lenin first became dissatisfied with the Party's performance, he thought up the Workers' and Peasants' Inspections and the first purges, which went along with a strengthening of the Cheka. Stalin continued the purges in successive waves of expulsions and executions; he cut off the Left wing, the Right wing, and finally the whole middle layer of Party functionaries. He constantly narrowed the basis on which his regime was built—while constantly admitting more members to the Party and widening the appeal of nationalism to non-members and non-Communists at the base of the social pyramid. In the end he had only the GPU (NKVD) itself; the Party had become a mere shell.

It is important to note that each contraction of the power base was followed by a new expansion or renewal; in Stalin's lifetime the dictatorship ran through this cycle at least three times, always losing the functionaries who had occasion to identify themselves too closely with their area of competence.

Stalin's death gave his successors a chance to start all over again, and we have seen Khrushchev first inveigling the Party against the bureaucrats, then the local bosses against the top Party brass, and eventually the masses against the Party. Already after the Twenty-second Party Congress it was possible to predict that, between Khrushchev and the Party, one would eventually have to liquidate the other. Richard Lowenthal has interpreted Khrushchev's ouster as a revolt of the Party hierarchy against threatening despotism and lawlessness.

•

If now we turn our attention to the recent developments in China, it all seems to fall into place. Mao Tse-tung has fought a successful battle against the Thermidorians, the liquidators, the revisionists in the Party's ranks. The Great Leap of 1958 was the first occasion for a sweeping purge of all those who identified themselves with their wards' interests. It was inevitable that in the course of this purge the

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enemy's image had to be projected abroad. Revisionism might or might not be a reality in Russia; the image of Russian revisionism became indispensable in Peking the moment the Great Leap had to be abandoned: the actual retreat from the pure goal of integral Communism had to be drowned out by intensified attacks on revisionists abroad. Nevertheless, for a while the situation seemed to have been stabilized in a triangular balance of power between the top leadership, the Party machine, and the "four classes" at the bottom of the social pyramid.

Whatever upset the balance this year (and there are indications that plain inefficiency and natural causes are as much to blame as the system)—if Mao was not ready to take the blame, the Party had to assume responsibility. If giving in to the general yearning for "normalcy" meant abandoning the tight controls which alone prevent utter chaos, those who were advocating adjustments to the people's demands had to be blamed for the failures and shortcomings of the Plan.

We know now that bitter struggles have plagued the Chinese Communist party for the past twelve months and that people like the Mayor of Peking or Chairman Liu Shao-chi favored a more moderate course. They could be demoted or expelled only by attacking revisionism in general, at home and abroad. From this turmoil, Defense Minister Lin Piao emerged as the strongest leader and heir apparent of Mao Tse-tung. Unable to attack the imperialists abroad, he can still impose "war Communism" on the Chinese people. But to do that, he will have to rely on a loyal middle layer of party functionaries—people who want to do a job and who want to get along with those whom they are supposed to command; people who also may not be eager to continue the regime of the desert fastness of Yenan where Mao welded his first People's Republic, or of the civil war. There must be hundreds of thousands, nay millions of middle functionaries now in their thirties or forties who would like to enjoy the fruits of the revolution and settle down for a Thermidor.

But where shall Lin Piao find a new body of functionaries to carry out a revolution? It is significant that Moscow's propagandists chose, as their main line of attack against the new Chinese rulers, an appeal to restore the Party to its former role. Perhaps they have information that permits them to hope for a "Thermidorian" reaction against the "Bonapartistic" development of the Chinese revolution.

•

In the Great Leap Forward, Mao exhausted the reservoir of leftist, anti-revisionist members of the Party; now he has to reach outside the Party for support. As Lenin reached out to the Communist Youth League and to the Workers' and Peasants' Inspections, and as Khrushchev called on "the people" to chase the bureaucrats, so Piao is creating his own youth organization to keep the Party in check and in terror. The Red Guards are described as "a permanent revolutionary organization, tightly organized and disciplined—the powerful reserve force of the People's Liberation Army." Its "Committees for the Organization of the Cultural Revolution" have been encouraged to assume functions of the

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regular Party cadres.[3] And all this Lin Piao justifies by asserting that the Party is failing the masses! This is no mere purge; it is a crisis of the Party, and as they would say in Moscow, "it is no accident" that newly promoted commissars have earned their spurs in the police.

The aim of this "great cultural revolution" thus seems to be twofold. First, to prevent the formation of power structures on the middle level of the Party organization which would be capable of resisting the will of the top leadership; second, to destroy the framework of Chinese civilization which likewise may enable the people to withstand the leadership's demands. Maybe we should add a third aim: to prevent a coalition between those old customs and the new Party organizers.

This is a real power struggle inside China, a struggle that has nothing to do with the greater or lesser militancy of China's war against imperialism. The seemingly more radical theories of class war are almost incompatible with an effective support of wars of national liberation abroad. China experts have rightly interpreted Lin Piao's famous speech in the sense that it is a mere do-it-yourself recipe addressed to Ho Chi Minh, almost denying him the kind of aid that might involve China in a war with the United States. One might even say more. Just as, in the early postwar years, Zhdanov undermined the Soviet army's effectiveness through his revolutionary policies, so Lin Piao deposed those generals who had objected to the misuse of the Army for political purposes at the expense of its military value.

Mao's turn to the Left has alienated, along with the generals, other professionals—the economists, the literary editors, the functionaries of the Ministry for Culture and Education, the experts on foreign affairs, and even the propagandists and large cadres of the Party. The "spiral" is rapidly narrowing, and the regime cannot find support unless it can once more mobilize the nation for a new *levée en masse* against the ogres of imperialism and revisionism. In the process of this mobilization, it may acquire a set of new functionaries and thereby a new lease on life. But, as Marx said about the coming depression, we don't know when another narrowing of the spiral will occur, but whenever it does occur, it is certain that Lin Piao cannot hold power with the sheer apparatus of power alone. He must provide some

[3] Every organization reform has a power motive. Thus Schurman writes (ibid.): "Though the village production brigade superficially often resembles earlier forms of organization . . . the dormant element of rich and elders has been replaced by a leadership group made up of young men and poor peasants. The aim has been not only to reorganize every village into a production brigade, but to implant party cells into every one of them."

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widening of support at the base; at present he tries to substitute for it the impetus of Maoist revolutionary puritanism, which must inevitably mobilize the more orthodox Party hierarchy. For all we know, the Party had made good provision for the case of Mao's demise, and Mao himself may have been a mere figurehead until he swam down the Yangtse River at record speed. The rise of Lin Piao made Mao's dive a major event in the ideological development of the Chinese revolution.

Pat Watters

SNCC in Trouble: A Report from Atlanta

ATLANTA, OCTOBER 1, 1966

The role of SNCC in the so-called Atlanta riots of September, 1966, gives some perspective on the black-power debate.

In the first place, "riot" was probably too strong a term by ghetto standards. There was relatively little firebombing and property destruction, and no looting. There was brick-throwing, and much milling about, with angry talk and shouts. Some police officers were injured; a television newsman (a notably humane one) had his skull badly fractured. White violence set things off. A white policeman shot a Negro auto-theft suspect who refused to halt in the Summerhill slum area on September 6, and three nights of rampage ensued. On September 10, Saturday night of the same week, a white motorist shot to death, apparently at random, a 16-year-old Negro boy in the Boulevard area, another slum. Similar rampaging broke loose in this locale and ended with the arrest of a suspect in the slaying.

In Atlanta, it is not uncommon in the summer for all the signs of a bad storm to build up all afternoon, with brooding black clouds, thunder rumbling and distant lightning flashing, and then to come to nothing—a few fat drops of rain, a gust of wind, no more, the sun soon shining forth. The "riots" were like that. They were a warning, perhaps a harbinger of tomorrow's real, full-fury storm.

Aside from far more volatile rampages in Jacksonville, Florida, in 1960 and again in 1964, the Atlanta rumblings were as near to Northern-style ghetto rioting as a Southern city has come. Atlanta was probably further along than most Southern cities in creating, by deliberate public policy, a Northern-style ghetto belt around the center of the city. James Baldwin in 1959 prophesized an all-engulfing Negro riot that would begin in Atlanta and spread across the nation. Instead, of course, the next year non-violent direct action came out of the South. Surely this outlet, this hope, along with several hundred years of conditioning against violence toward whites —which seems still to effect even so vio-

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lence-oriented an organization as the Deacons for Defense and Justice—saved the South or postponed disaster.

SNCC and CORE, in enunciating this summer the rationale and dogma of black power, advocated armed self-defense. This was no innovation. Negroes as individuals (as opposed to direct-action demonstrators) had been armed and shooting back when they dared throughout the non-violent years. ("I believe in my Bible and my 30-30," said a local voter registration leader in 1962.) But important was the break of SNCC and CORE with the non-violent tradition as a movement strategy. A second crucial strategic break was political—away from the concept of coalition with white liberals and labor. These seemed the salient features of the new credo of hopelessness and revulsion, along with its emotional undertone of racism, denied by the black-power advocates but unmistakable to a white Southerner familiar with racism's nasty nuances.

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The Summerhill slum is in the shadow of an $18 million municipal sports stadium recently built by stretching community resources and credit to the limit. Its long-range economic influence is likely to be beneficial and may prove more humane than were the cotton mills erected in a similar spirit all over the South after the Civil War. But the city did not exhibit a similar determination to go all out to improve housing, schools, and other unspeakable ingredients of slum life. The Community Council of Atlanta, a private agency, had outlined Summerhill's obvious ills in February, 1966, including overcrowding and neighborhood instability caused in part by urban renewal refugees from the stadium site.

There were also the conditions in the Boulevard area, where slum clearance was caused by motel building. In Summerhill, grievances against parking restrictions caused by the stadium added to the old, justified hatred for the bully-boy cop, found also in Boulevard and every other American slum. Mayor Ivan Allen Jr. went nightly to the "riot" scenes, trying to quiet people down. Many felt that, after his initial courageous action, he might spend his evenings better solving some of the real problems in this perilous situation: things might have gone up in flames any night—with more than half of Atlanta's firemen on strike at the time because of their notoriously low pay.

Against this background Atlanta's mayor and chief of police proclaimed SNCC responsible for the Summerhill rioting, and a number of its staff members were arrested, including Stokely Carmichael. I think it is clear that SNCC, egging on spontaneous anger and dismay in both areas, acted irresponsibly. But a statement by the city's responsible intergroup relations workers pointed out that the real causes of the riots were intolerable living conditions and a public policy that exacerbated rather than ameliorated them.

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This scapegoating of SNCC had its national counterpart in the explanations given for the destruction of the 1966 civil rights act—a blow of incalculable damage to the Negro people of the South, because the bill contained not only the fair housing provision so distasteful to some former firebrand Northern friends of the Negro

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cause, but also the crucial provisions for reform of Southern administration of justice. Without this latter bastion, as essential to eradicating Southern racist control as the vote, none of the previous civil rights legislation, including the Voting Rights Act itself, was secure. Negro violence, and Atlanta's "rioting" surely included, was also blamed. All along Congress (and much of the American public) had acted to help avoid violence (remember Birmingham?) rather than against injustice. Congress now seemed to say that, as it had "punished" the white South for its violence by passing civil rights legislation, it would now "punish" the Negroes for theirs by withholding it.

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The dilemmas and paradoxes of black power have become clearer. Mr. Carmichael and others have talked of exploiting riots with demands on the white power structure. But no moves or abilities along these lines seemed evident in SNCC during or after the Atlanta disturbances. Other groups, including Dr. King's SCLC—all the while struggling with SNCC for the minds of the riotous—showed some adeptness at this.

Mayor Allen came out of it all vowing to eliminate slums, and he is a man who, once he gets such an idea (as with the stadium), tends to deliver. But the slums were only the most obvious and pressing symptom of faulty public policy common to the South (and to how much of the nation?) and SNCC and black power were a new and dandy rationalization for not facing up to the real sickness.

But the alternate strategy of coalition was not doing well either. In Georgia's governor's race—as though to underscore the real origins of Atlanta's "riots," and probably with a degree of back-lash from them—a racist white majority emerged to nominate the rabid little Lester Maddox in the Democratic primaries, and buttoned-down racism had in part inspired the candidacy of his Republican opponent, Howard Callaway. Similarly, white racism was dimming the promise of political sanity inherent in reapportionment and Negro franchisement in much of the rest of the South. With each defeat of coalition, in the South and nationally, and such was the killing of the civil rights bill, black power's ugliest premise—that white society is thoroughly racist—was strengthened in its influence on Negroes. The prospects, as translated into action in Atlanta, or as summed up in the dubious potential of all-black politics for even denting the desperate needs of the majority of Negro people, were not encouraging.

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During the Atlanta disturbances, the Negro community initially recoiled from SNCC. The mistake of jailing Carmichael mitigated this. In Vine City, a slum where SNCC had been working with an eye to explosive grievances, its stock went very low after word of its role in the "riots." But forces from without the community seemed to encourage Vine City to run SNCC out. Some residents were even convinced that the cops would not have been loathe to see a little anti-

In our next issue:
Gunnar Myrdal,
ON PROBLEMS OF
UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES

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SNCC rioting. The people met in their Vine City Council, and here is what they decided: it is not right to run people out just because you don't agree with them. SNCC people had as much right in Vine City as anybody else. The people had come to precisely the same decision when SNCC, previously, had urged them to get rid of a white missionary living with his family in their midst.

Such had been the real idealism of the movement and the source of its strength from the beginning, a beautiful grasp of the essential principles of civilization by the Negro people of the South. They have survived so much, with good sense intact. Perhaps they might avoid even the blandishments of black power, this sad thing to which their once most idealistic activists have been driven.

Where Is "The Movement" Now?

An Interview With James Farmer

James Farmer, former head of CORE, now concentrates his energies on pushing forward his program for teaching reading and writing to the millions of "functional illiterates" among the poor white and black masses of the country. Because the federal government has shown reluctance to back such a program, he is for the time developing a statewide program in New Jersey, where he acts as consultant to the governor. But, as a recent talk with him indicated, his involvement in all phases of the Negro Revolution remains unchanged.

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Our discussion began with a question on the "state of the Movement." Farmer readily acknowledged that it faces several major crises. First and most important: the recent realization that the victories won during the past five years (victories Farmer has no wish to downgrade)) has not basically changed the "life situation" of the Negro masses, especially in the urban ghettos of the North. These victories (some school desegregation, registration and voting rights, equal accommodations, etc.) have primarily benefited the Southern Negro but have left the Northern Negro "just about where he was"—poor and weak. Farmer considers him worse off now in the sense that his relative economic position has worsened and his heightened expectations remain unfulfilled.

The Movement, in Farmer's words, is now going through "an agonizing phase of redefinition" concerning goals, assumptions, strategy and tactics. The fundamental philosophic debate now going on in the civil rights movement centers around a seeming paradox: namely, that meaningful integration can be brought about only through the enhancement of N[illegible] self-pride. Many find this intellectually contradictory and confusing in terms of action, but Farmer does not. He favors the "integration of equals, based

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upon the acceptance of group identification as such." He acknowledges that this is a difficult debate, often distorted and led astray by the temptations of the mass media.

Farmer points out that thus far we have witnessed a "revolt of the powerless," operating not with the weapons of real power and organization but rather through the use of power *substitutes*—the press, television, etc. As yet, the Negro poor have had no part in decision-making or in the formulation of policy. Things are decided for them, not by them. Of all the Negro groups, the middle-class Negroes have gained the most thus far in terms of salaried jobs, showcase positions, education, housing, and recognition. But this group represents an insignificant number of the 20 million American Negroes.

What of the debate over "black power"? Farmer replied that it has had a mixed effect, but essentially he feels that it has launched a healthy discussion. What are these issues? The direction of the Movement, its leadership, questions of racial and ethnic pride (not necessarily connected with racial chauvinism), and tactics for taking the Movement closer to its "grass roots." In these terms, the discussion over "black power" represents a transition to a new and more complex phase of the Movement. Finally, the Movement will benefit from the debate, despite its frequent demagogy and sensationalism. That "black power" and the arguments surrounding this slogan have negative features is likewise undeniable. These include further polarization between American blacks and whites, the splitting-off of the Negro middle class from the lower-class Negroes, the breaching of ties between various civil rights organizations, and a sharp drop in fund-raising. But Farmer is convinced that such negative aspects will be overcome by the need for Negro organizations to hang together in the face of increasing obstacles.

Clearly, the slogan of "black power" means different things to different people. To the reactionary white, determined to resist desegregation, it is a red flag implying a reversal of positions in American society. The leaders of CORE attach different shades of meaning to the slogan. They all agree that it implies a tremendous growth in pride and self-identity among the Negro masses. Second, it means overcoming the present powerlessness through economic and political means. Third, new jobs must be created for unemployed Negro youth and lower-class Negroes. "Black power" also embraces the notion of a guaranteed annual income for Negro families on welfare, as well as a concentrated effort to transform the economic structure of the ghetto through the financing of Negro-owned businesses and cooperatives. Finally, "black power" means the political organization of the Negro in those areas where he constitutes a majority and where the exercise of his political weight will bring advantage to him.

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Over the years the Negro Revolution has centered around the struggle for desegregation in education, housing, etc. Has this emphasis lost its significance? Farmer answers this question in the negative, but he immediately adds that desegregation must now be put in the framework of a new perspective. Take, for example, the hous-

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ing issue. The struggle for open housing goes on, but it has become a secondary issue for the Movement. The real housing issue lies in the slums; the Harlems, realistically speaking, will continue to exist indefinitely. Our efforts must be concentrated in improving the ghetto, *there* where it is. Despite some existing dispersal, basically, the answer lies in a massive program of federal- and state-sponsored housing within the ghetto. It is the environment, atmosphere, and condition of life within the ghetto that must be changed.

By the same token, Farmer favors a more realistic attitude toward the education issue. Certainly the struggle for school desegregation must be continued, but there must be immediate stress on improving schools within the slums. At the same time, of course, school desegregation must be pursued by such means as bussing, the development of large-scale educational parks, and the continuation of the open-school enrollment policies.

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To questions about CORE having been "taken over" by so-called black nationalists, Farmer answered with an indignant "no." He asked what is meant by the term "black nationalist." There are professional "black nationalists" who make a fetish out of color, Africa, racism, etc., but Farmer denies that such elements have any influence in CORE today. If by "nationalists" we mean those who favor the development of Negro self-pride, then that factor in CORE leadership has certainly been strengthened and is reflected in the belief that the active leadership should be in the hands of Negroes. Farmer does not consider CORE ever to have been basically a "pacifist organization." It grew out of the Fellowship for Reconciliation, but pacifism was not its basic doctrine. CORE was and remains committed, however, to the technique of nonviolence. Farmer added that he remains a member of CORE and on good terms with its present leadership.

While indicating substantial agreement with the general views of Bayard Rustin, Farmer feels that Rustin's concept of a "grand alliance" with labor is now impractical. Whether we like it or not, the fact is that the white and black poor are not joining together in concerted action.

The concept of the nation-wide "grand alliance" has been shaken to its roots by the new tendency among Negroes to struggle for their own self-identification. There cannot be any "grand alliances" now; only (and this ought not to be underestimated) *ad hoc* alliances on the local, state, and regional levels for specific purposes. These can best take shape in the form of campaigns—for example, the recent grape pickers' strike in California which achieved wide union support up to the level of a nationwide boycott, or the formation of local political voting alliances against segregationist congressmen and senators.

Farmer does not feel the Movement ought to become involved in the support of peace candidates campaigning largely on the Vietnam issue. He considers this a legitimate political activity on the part of such candidates, but separate and apart from the civil rights movement.

STANLEY PLASTRIK

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M. Vincent Miller

WORKERS ON THE FARM

After the Grape Pickers' Strike

OCTOBER, 1966

Delano is entirely typical of the innumerable rural towns that dot the vast stretches of farmland in California's agricultural valleys. Lying off Highway 99, the main artery through the San Joaquin Valley, it is a thoroughly unimpressive-looking place, with some 13,500 inhabitants. Its business district spans three or four streets about half a dozen blocks long. There is a shady middle-class residential area on the east side with pleasant old homes. On the west and south sides an assortment of structures, from cheap tract homes to shacks, contains that portion of the Mexican and Filipino farm worker families fortunate enough to avoid the labor camps on the growers' property. Just outside town begin the miles of vineyards upon which the community's economy stands or totters. In normal times, the tempo of life in Delano is slow, though it fluctuates with the seasonal cycle of the grape crop.

Formidable obstacles have prevented the farm worker in areas like Delano from improving his pathetically low wages, from obtaining even the most rudimentary bargaining rights, from breaking free of a stigmatized and rootless way of life. With respect to the social structure it creates, this sector of American agriculture resembles a feudal system in which the laborer who tends the crop plays the role of a nomadic serf. Most field workers come from non-Caucasian minorities and thus have little chance of gaining entry into the farming community's white middle class or, for that matter, of being hired for industrial jobs in the cities. In order to get anything remotely approximating steady work, they usually have to move from crop to crop, often traveling a circuit through several states (there exists, however, an important exception to this in Delano, which will become clear later). Frequently their only homes are in the field camps, where they can't be reached easily by labor organizers who are supremely *persona non grata* on grower property. Thirty years ago, Congress excluded farm labor from the legislation that enabled industrial workers to engage in collective bargaining; sub-

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sequent bills extending this to agricultural workers have been strangled.

Numerous organizing drives and strikes have started up on California farms, but these have rarely made any real headway. Memberships were built up and sometimes slight wage increases achieved; but no meaningful contracts with growers followed.

With the cards thus stacked against them, workers in the Delano grape fields, led by the AFL-CIO's Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee and the locally-based National Farm Workers Association, went out on strike in the fall of 1965. After months of intensely bitter struggle involving the entire Delano community, the strikers have won some unprecedented concessions from the two largest growers in the area. Last June 21, NFWA and Schenley Industries, Inc. signed a contract that guarantees Schenley's field labor a minimum wage of $1.75 per hour and substitutes an NFWA hiring hall for the customary practice of employing directly or through labor contractors. And on August 30, NFWA and AWOC, newly merged under the AFL-CIO, beat the Teamsters' Union in an election to determine who would represent the Di Giorgio Corporation's Delano and Borrego Springs field crews at the bargaining table. No matter who had won, a representation election held on the farms of a major agricultural producer was in itself a historic event.

These achievements have considerably brightened the outlook for unionizing farm labor in America. The Delano effort, which still has a long way to go, is only a surface scratch in agriculture's traditional resistance to unions, but it is one that can't be smoothed over. The events in Delano have aroused widespread public sympathy for the farm workers and rekindled the labor movement's desire to bring them into the fold. And in recent months, there have been farm strikes in Texas and marches in Wisconsin, stirrings in Oregon and Arizona, Florida and Colorado.

II

Why did the grape strikers succeed in pushing their demands farther than farm workers have been able to do in the past? Perhaps the chief reason has to do with the ingenious manner in which NFWA, led by Cesar Chavez, drew on the heritage of moral response created by the civil rights movement, in order to dramatize the farm worker's plea for better wages and working conditions. Most previous farm strikes have remained isolated local phenomena, easily snuffed out by growers. Under Chavez's guidance, however, the grape strike became more like a movement for social justice, a cause for national liberal and radical sentiment to rally around.

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The strike began at the outset of the 1965 harvest season, when AWOC's local membership, consisting predominantly of Filipino field workers, refused to pick grapes unless their $1.10 or $1.20 per hour wages were raised to $1.40. On September 8 Filipino workers staged a sit-in at the grower-owned camps. Larry Itliong, AWOC regional director, asked NFWA's large, well-organized Mexican-American constituency to cooperate. NFWA held a meeting on September 16 and voted to join the strike.

Conditions were more favorable than usual for calling a farm strike. Constant agitation by AWOC and other groups, such the Berkeley-based Citizens for Farm Labor, had finally killed the bracero program. Under a new public law, braceros could be brought in only when special manpower shortages warranted it and with a guaranteed minimum wage of $1.40 an hour. This had cut off one of the farmers' main sources for keeping wages depressed and breaking strikes. Although the Delano grape growers do not generally use braceros to harvest the crop, the new stricter law had created an atmosphere more conducive to demands for higher farm-labor wages.

Furthermore, it is much easier to organize workers in the grape territory than in most agricultural areas. If they are to flourish, grapevines require careful attention, involving several different operations, during ten or eleven months of the year. Even though migrant workers pour into Delano during the harvest, when jobs and wages are at a peak, there is also a semi-skilled residential population that works all year long. This relatively permanent labor force can form a solid core. Some of the resident workers live in town where the organizer can get to them, and they can pass on the message during work to those who live in the camps.

Despite these circumstances, it seems certain that the strikers would not have had much success in a traditional labor-management economic tug-of-war with growers like Schenley and Di Giorgio. Farm workers, even locally organized ones, could not gain sufficient leverage against the growers' wealth, their alliances with local and state authorities, the ease with which they could bring in scab labor. In its seven years AWOC had called strike after strike without winning any contracts. If the labor movement had ever thrown its full weight behind AWOC, these strikes might have been more effective; but although the AFL-CIO continued to provide AWOC with enough funds to stay alive, unionizing farm labor had not been one of its overwhelming enthusiasms.

NFWA was uniquely equipped to come up with a new approach to these problems. NFWA director Cesar Chavez, who had been a migrant

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laborer in his youth, had left the fields to spend ten years with the Community Service Organization, a group that deals mainly with the problems of California's urban Mexican-American population. CSO had close connections, financially and philosophically, with Saul Alinsky, and Chavez gained experience in grass-roots organization techniques. In 1962, he resigned from CSO and came to Delano, where he started NFWA as an independent union. In three years' time, NFWA had become a militant organization of Mexican-American farm workers, operating along highly democratic, communal lines and supporting a number of self-help projects. Since the strike began, NFWA has been able to supply the strikers with an incredible amount of welfare and morale support, including a credit union, a weekly newspaper, a three-meal-a-day strike kitchen, an indigenous theater group, and a medical clinic staffed by volunteer doctors, nurses, and dentists.

Thus with NFWA's entrance, the strike almost at once became a grass-roots movement. Yet this in itself would still not have prevailed against the grape growers. However, in the absence of a militant and, at that time, interested national labor movement, Chavez and his co-workers were able to tap another source of outside support: There has come into being with civil rights and poverty politics a kind of nerve network running along the edge of American society that can be triggered into action by an appropriate struggle against social injustice. NFWA alerted SNCC and CORE, the student movement, the churches newly awakened to social problems by the Negro, and the Migrant Ministry, a group of clergymen sponsored by the National Council of Churches, who through working with farm laborers in the fields for many years had come to combine their concern for the Holy Word with an interest in radical social action.

These forces responded instantly—a steady procession of civil rights workers, college students, ministers and priests, and progressive union people began to file through Delano. Some stayed on as full-time NFWA staff workers; the rest went back to their cities and campuses to spread the word, organize fund-raising drives, stir up support in trade union locals. They helped farm workers man roving picket lines that tried to pull out scabs by shouting to them from the county roads running through the grape fields. And they formed the corps that NFWA used to implement national boycotts of Schenley and Di Giorgio products. The strike took on a tone of moral urgency, such as one associates with a freedom drive in Mississippi or Alabama. NFWA carried its cause into state politics with a three-week march from Delano to Sacra-

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mento which ended on Easter Sunday at the State Capitol building amid a throng of 10,000 enthusiastic supporters.

The weapon that NFWA mobilized against the growers was not merely economic power but also moral power. It is difficult to say just what brought Schenley to the bargaining table and Di Giorgio to the polls. In large measure, their vulnerability may have been due to the fact that they are national corporations; the same tactics probably would not have broken the numerous independent growers, though they will eventually have to fall in line now that the two local giants have capitulated. Without doubt the Schenley and Di Giorgio boycotts were effective, not because they did the two companies grievous economic damage but because their public images were hurt. One can imagine the feedback in Delano when the Schenley New York office found the New Left and the churches organizing against it.

III

If Chavez's coalition of moral activists was building strong support outside Delano, it was having quite the opposite impact on the town. Delano's middle-class citizenry reacted as though Jesse James and his gang had ridden in to shoot up the place. When guards hired by the growers beat up farm workers on the picket lines, the local police arrested the farm workers. Students and ministers were frequently jailed on vague charges. The *Delano Record* took a fervent stand against NFWA. In one issue, the caption to a photograph of Chavez addressing a rally in San Francisco asked readers to notice that the U.S. flag was being flown below NFWA's own flag, as though this somehow indicated what the strikers' *real* intentions were. A group of local merchants, businessmen, housewives, and pensioners formed an organization called Citizens for Facts, whose avowed aim is to distribute impartial information about the strike but whose practice has more often been to attack NFWA and its outside help in the vocabulary of witch-hunting paranoia.

What accounts for this violent antagonism toward the strike? For one thing, the townspeople by and large have always echoed the growers' anti-union sentiments. From a strictly utilitarian angle, it is questionable whether this attitude makes sense—an argument as reasonable as any other is that the wider buying power and more stable, responsible work force created by union wage increases and hiring practices would be good for the town's economy.

But threatened pocketbooks probably did not count for as much in the town's reaction as threatened class and social values. While there is little overt tone of white supremacy in Delano, the Mexican and Filipino laborers are treated with a genteel paternalism that keeps most

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of them firmly in place as second-class citizens. In the eyes of the town burghers, the image of NFWA presented didn't mean simply unionism; it spelled "revolution," disorder, the Mexican farm workers' flag above the American flag.

What most profoundly shook the town were the student radicals and clergymen who took part in the struggle. Perhaps the threat that students posed was ultimately the lesser. The town could release its rage by calling them Communists and beatniks. But seeing out-of-town ministers of their own faiths engaging in "revolutionary activities" on picket lines hit the citizens where it hurts. Middle-class Delano looks to the churches for social solidarity and perhaps even salvation, but certainly not for political action. As a result bitter disputes about the clergy's role in society have broken out between Delano churches, which are strongly opposed to the strike, other San Joaquin Valley churches which have taken various positions, and parishes and archdioceses outside the region which have been some of NFWA's best support. These quarrels have considerably shaken the California denominations.

There was one other event which fed resentment in the town. About the time the strike began, the Office of Economic Opportunities awarded NFWA a grant of more than $250,000 to train indigenous farm workers in rural leadership. Growers and Delano townspeople figured this money would be used to fund the strike. Chavez asked the OEO to hold the money in abeyance; he may never see it now. But bad feeling remained, no doubt placing the federal government in the "outside agitator" category.

IV

The grape strike entered a new phase early last summer, when big labor came to Delano in full battle dress, not only to fight the growers but to engage in civil war. Battle lines were drawn between the AFL-CIO and the Teamsters, and the issues raised in that confrontation will have a far-reaching effect on future farm labor organizing in America.

From an early point in the strike, NFWA and AWOC forces had worked up considerable rank-and-file and regional leadership support among union locals throughout California. The Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Alameda County Central Labor Councils started making regular contributions to the strikers. Under the direction of Ann Draper of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, the San Francisco Labor Council sent monthly motorcades, bearing food and clothing. The ILWU members on the San Francisco docks refused to load Delano grapes for shipping. Though Teamster support was uneven in the Valley, it was fairly strong at first in Northern and Southern California; the first big picket

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line in Los Angeles against Di Giorgio products was manned by several hundred Teamsters.

Some AFL-CIO high-level circles began to realize at an early date that what was happening in Delano was not the usual agricultural strike. Paul Schrade, NAW Western regional director, became a strong NFWA supporter and a key liaison between Chavez and top AFL-CIO echelons. In mid-December Walter Reuther who, like Bobby Kennedy in the Democratic party, is always sensitive to a potential political base to the left of the chief, appeared in Delano to address the strikers and join Chavez and Itliong in a march through town. Reuther followed up with $5,000 a month to be split between AWOC and NFWA. William Kircher, head of AFL-CIO organizing, and IUD's executive director Jack Conway worked to build a bridge between AFL-CIO policy and the NFWA approach. Kircher and Conway wanted Itliong's group to join the march to Sacramento, but California AWOC head Al Green refused to work with elements outside established labor, and he dissuaded the Filipinos from marching.

Toward the end of spring, a change in Teamster policy quickly eliminated any further possibility that Chavez's organization might remain outside the national labor movement. Teamster organizers, attempting to unhorse both NFWA and AWOC, appeared on the Di Giorgio grounds and started their own organizing drive, although they drew back after a few days upon being denounced, remarkably enough, by NFWA's church support. But Di Giorgio, who had either encouraged the Teamsters in the first place or who now saw a chance to get rid of Chavez and Itliong, unilaterally arranged an election for June 24, in which only presently employed workers would be eligible to vote. Moreover, there were signs that Di Giorgio foremen were passing out Teamster membership cards and ordering employees to vote for the Teamsters. In protest, NFWA and AWOC called for a boycott of the polls and refused to permit their names on the ballot. Needless to say, the Teamsters won.

Subsequently, various labor, religious, and Mexican-American organizations—including California's powerful Mexican-American Political Association—pushed Governor Brown (who up to this point had kept himself entirely aloof from the events at Delano) into doing something about the bizarre, one-sided election. Brown sent in Ronald W. Haughton, a labor relations expert from Wayne State University, to investigate; and on Haughton's recommendations, the August 30 election was established.

With the new election a few weeks away, the Teamsters opened a

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full-scale campaign at the Di Giorgio farm. Squadrons of top Teamster organizers arrived in Delano, looking urban and expensive in contrast to NFWA's grass-roots style. They brought along San Francisco public relations experts, set up shop in one of Delano's two relatively swank motels, drove out to the fields in new cars and minibuses loaded with fancy sound equipment, and passed out free key chains and soda pop to the workers. On occasion, they sought support in what would seem forbidden territory to a labor union: William Grami, coordinator for the Teamster Drive, gave an address before the Citizens for Facts, in which he attacked NFWA in terms not unlike those of his audience. By this time it was common knowledge that the Teamsters were on friendly terms with Di Giorgio—the company published an open letter to its employees urging them to elect the Teamsters on August 30.

What brought the Teamsters into the fray? One explanation is that the huge union has a vulnerable flank to protect. If, for example, a militant farm workers' union like NFWA were to gain sufficient statewide influence in agriculture, it could call harvest strikes that might suspend work for some 150,000 Teamster food-processing workers in California canneries and packing sheds, as well as for large numbers of truck drivers. To turn over the coin—with farm workers in its fold, the Teamsters would have substantial control over agricultural labor operations at almost every point from the fields to the marketplace.

Apparently the latter possibility did not bother Di Giorgio. The Teamsters in Delano were promoting their "business unionism" formula, which emphasizes preserving harmonious labor-management relations by using the most tranquil routes to collective bargaining. They sold the company, if not the workers.

In response to the Teamster threat, it was decided that NFWA and AWOC would become a single AFL-CIO organization. There were some immediate practical reasons for this move: Staying separate would mean a split in the Mexican and Filipino Di Giorgio vote. And the merger would enable Chavez to draw freely on AFL-CIO resources and prestige. At an AFL-CIO Executive Council meeting in Chicago a week before the election, the merger received official blessings and a new name, United Farm Workers Organizing Committee. Chavez was appointed director.

V

The arrival of big labor in Delano raises questions about the sort of unions farm workers can now hope to get. How much difference is there ultimately between what the AFL-CIO and what the Teamsters' Union has to offer? And now that the AFL-CIO has absorbed Chavez

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and the NFWA, what impact will the centralized labor giant and the tiny democratic and activist farm workers' organization have on one another?

The two questions are closely related. The AFL-CIO victory has by no means chased the Teamsters from the farmlands. Grower by grower, crop by crop, wherever Chavez and the AFL-CIO goes, Teamster organizers will follow, and vice versa. In future struggles for votes and contracts, perhaps the chief advantage that the AFL-CIO has over the Teamsters is the grass-roots and moral-cause appeal of Chavez's group and its loose coalition of outside support. Whether the AFL-CIO leadership will give Chavez free rein to continue operating in his Delano manner remains to be seen.

There are signs, however, that the AFL-CIO may go farther in this direction than one might have expected. During the Di Giorgio clash the AFL-CIO pitted its newest organizing concept, called "social unionism," against Teamster business unionism. Social unionism, as formulated by Walter Reuther and the IUD's Jack Conway, takes its cue in part from the new political mood generated by Alinsky, Martin Luther King Jr., and other community action leaders. It centers around the notion that organizing for bargaining power can be extended from the job site out into the community at large, so that not only wages and working conditions are at stake but education, housing, poverty, and unemployment as well. Thus far, social unionism is mostly ideology, although a few pilot projects have been set in motion: In Chicago, UAW organizers funded by the IUD have hooked up with the tenants' unions started by King to work out a new basis for dealing with slumlords. And Paul Schrade and other labor officials in Los Angeles have helped create the Watts Labor Action Council, a neighborhood union staffed by AFL-CIO rank-and-file who live in the area, to recruit Negroes for jobs, set up training and recreation programs, and press for better general living conditions.

It is significant that the AFL-CIO officials who became most involved in the Delano events were social unionism's leading advocates. Explaining the new concept to the press, Conway singled out NFWA as the model for what he has in mind.

Another suggestion of a shift toward the experimental within AFL-CIO ranks was brought out when the Di Giorgio election drive was at its peak. The grape strike set the stage for the first real meeting between big labor and the student movement, two groups who have not felt much trust and warmth for one another in recent years. When Chavez joined the AFL-CIO, no doubt some students who had been

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with the NFWA movement from its beginnings felt that they had been sold out. And no doubt some AFL-CIO veteran organizers who came in to help with the campaign felt uneasy working alongside the youthful, idealistic radicals. But on the whole, relations between the student volunteers and the labor officials were remarkable for their harmony, achieved under the duress and excitement of at least a temporary common cause. William Kircher was quoted in the *Fresno Bee* just before the election to the effect that AFL-CIO organizers were strung out from Oregon to the Mexican border trying to locate eligible voters who had moved on to other crops. According to NFWA, however, these particular "organizers" were almost entirely students, along with a few activist ministers and NFWA strikers that Chavez had sent out. Apparently Kircher had conferred official AFL-CIO status upon the whole lot for the benefit of the press. While Chavez's entry into the AFL-CIO will hardly radicalize that organization, neither does it appear that the AFL-CIO will try to press Chavez into one of its more conventional leadership molds.

VI

The farm workers' future also depends heavily on whether the strike will have political consequences that might significantly affect farm labor legislation.

Despite their conservative social values, many California agricultural communities like Delano are by no means political throwbacks to rugged frontier individualism—that strange yearning seems to well up most strongly in California's suburbs. Delano's voters, for example, are Democrats by a margin of nearly two to one. Up till now, the state Democratic party has managed to keep the growers' friendship by not actively worrying—to put it mildly—about the plight of farm workers. Governor Brown has made campaign promises about pushing farm labor legislation, which nobody, including himself, has taken seriously.

But now the grape strike has put California Democrats on the spot. On the one hand, the furious Delano growers and townspeople, as well as farmers elsewhere in the state, anxiously watching the stirrings around them, have been demanding that their elected guardians of law and order quell Chavez and his friends. But since the strike, farm workers cannot be ignored politically for very much longer—they are becoming increasingly well-organized, ready for action, and have gained wide liberal and labor support.

As the strike swung into high gear last fall and winter, the politicians assumed their customary position—they saw fit to take a walk. John Williamson, the State Assemblyman from the district that includes

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Delano (and who also happens to be chairman of the Assembly's Committee on Agriculture), kept silent—which alienated almost everybody. The local State Senator, Walter Stern, also mostly kept to himself. Brown capped his inaction by being notably absent from Sacramento when the marching farm workers arrived on Easter Sunday. Not until mounting public pressure forced him to take steps with regard to the Di Giorgio election did he become involved at all.

It is difficult to say whether political shifts in the state, following in the wake of the strike, will aid the farm labor cause very much in the near future. For one thing, the outcome of the Brown-Reagan contest is too uncertain for too many reasons. There is no question that Brown's lack of interest in the Easter march did him political damage; most liberal and labor elements in the state were represented that Sunday, arrayed in a show of strong sympathy with the farm workers. However, this sort of alienated liberal sentiment will not show up to any significant degree in the November race with Reagan. Even Chavez has decided to back Brown before then, since a Reagan victory could stand in the way of important pending farm labor legislation.

Perhaps there is more hope in the long run for action from Washington. Senator Harrison Williams of New Jersey, who, with Bobby Kennedy and George Murphy, held a Senate hearing in Delano, has initiated new legislation to extend bargaining rights to farm workers, and Congressman Phil Burton from San Francisco has done the same in the House. Even as they continue fighting grass-roots skirmishes, the fledgling farm labor unions must look to the lawmakers to help them win the war. Only at the federal and state levels can moral conscience pressuring for social change become translated into the kind of political power which can offset those economic and class interests that want to preserve the status quo. Marvelously inspiring as the Delano struggle has been, both for the farm workers themselves and the students, ministers, and trade unionists who helped them, anyone who reflects upon the recent events in California must conclude that, for the American dispossessed, political and economic action have to go together.

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Isaac Babel

AND THEN THERE WERE NONE...

This story, written in 1923 under the Russian title "They Were Nine," has never been published in either the Soviet Union or abroad. It appears here in translation for the first time.

Although the story clearly belongs to the Red Cavalry *cycle, it is likely that Babel chose not to include it since he used some of its elements for the more complicated narrative of the story called "Squadron Commander Trunov," dated 1925. There is a difference of emphasis between the two stories. Whereas the Cossack's killing of the prisoners in "And Then There Were None" appears shockingly brutal, in "Squadron Commander Trunov" it is modified by the main character's otherwise heroic behavior and by the narrator's reluctance to judge and condemn.*

In a diary that he kept during the Polish campaign, Babel notes under the date of August 30, 1920, an episode concerning ten Polish prisoners. In the same diary he asks the question: "What is our Cossack?" The answer he gives is, "Layers: worthlessness, daring, professionalism, revolutionary spirit, animalistic cruelty." It is seemingly in this spirit that "And Then There Were None" was written. Later on, in other writings, the material of the diary will be reexamined and reinterpreted, and the Cossack will acquire the legendary stature that he has in some of Babel's stories. Nathalie Babel

The prisoners are dead, all nine of them. I feel it in my bones.

Yesterday, when Corporal Golov, a worker from Sormovo, killed the lanky Pole, I said to our staff officer that the corporal was setting a bad example for the men and that we ought to make up a list of the prisoners and send them back for questioning. The staff officer agreed. I got a pencil and paper out of my knapsack and called Golov. He gave me a look of hatred and said, "You look at the world through those spectacles of yours."

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"Yes, I do," I replied. "And what do you look at the world through, Golov?"

"I look at it through the dog's life of us workers," he said and walked back toward one of the prisoners, carrying in his hands a Polish uniform with dangling sleeves. He had tried it on, and it did not fit him—the sleeves scarcely reached down to his elbows.

Now Golov fingered the prisoner's smart-looking underpants. "You're an officer," Golov said, shielding his face from the sun with one hand.

"No," came the Pole's curt answer.

"The likes of us don't wear that sort of stuff," Golov muttered and fell silent. He said nothing, quivering as he looked at the prisoner, his eyes blank and wide.

"My mother knitted them," the prisoner said in a firm voice.

I turned around and looked at him. He was a slim-waisted youth with curly sideburns on his sallow cheeks. "My mother knitted them," he said again and looked down.

"She knits like a machine, that mother of yours," Andrushka Burak butted in. Burak is the pink-faced Cossack with silky hair who had pulled the trousers off the lanky Pole as he lay dying. These trousers were now thrown over his saddle. Laughing, Andrushka rode up to Golov, carefully took the uniform out of his hands, threw it over the saddle on top of the trousers, and, with a slight flick of his whip, rode away from us again. At this moment the sun poured out from behind the dark clouds. It cast a dazzling light on Andrushka's horse as it cantered off perkily with carefree movements of its docked tail. Golov looked after the departing Cossack with a bemused expression. He turned around and saw me writing out the list of prisoners. Then he saw the young Pole with his curly sideburns, who glanced at him with the calm disdain of youth and smiled at his confusion. Then Golov cupped his hands to his mouth and shouted, "This is still a republic, Andrushka! You'll get your share later. Let's have that stuff back."

Andrushka turned a deaf ear. He rode on at a gallop, and his horse swung its tail friskily just as though it was brushing us off.

"Traitor," Golov said, pronouncing the word very clearly. He looked sulky and his face went stiff. He knelt down on one knee, took aim with his rifle and fired, but he missed.

Andrushka immediately turned his horse around and charged right up to the corporal. His fresh, pink-cheeked face was angry. "Listen, brother!" he shouted loud and clear and was suddenly pleased by the sound of his own strong voice. "Want to get hurt, you bastard? Why the fuss about finishing off ten Poles? We've killed them off by the hundreds

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before now without asking your help. Call yourself a worker? Make a job of it, then." And looking at us in triumph, Andrushka galloped off.

Golov did not look up at him. He put his hand to his forehead. Blood was pouring off it like rain off a hayrick. He lay down on his stomach, crawled over to a ditch and for a long time held his battered, bleeding head in the shallow trickle of water.

The prisoners are dead. I feel it in my bones.

Sitting on my horse, I made a list of them in neat columns. In the first column I numbered them in order, in the second column I gave their names, and in the third the units to which they belonged. It worked out to nine altogether. The fourth was Adolf Shulmeister, a Jewish clerk from Lodz. He kept pressing up to my horse and stroked and caressed my boot with trembling fingers. His leg had been broken with a rifle butt. It left a thin trail of blood like that of a wounded dog, and sweat, glistening in the sun, bubbled on his cracked, yellowish bald pate.

"You are a *Jude,* sir!" he whispered, frantically fondling my stirrup. "You are—" he squealed, the spittle dribbling from his mouth, and his whole body convulsed with joy.

"Get back into line, Shulmeister!" I shouted at the Jew, and suddenly, overcome by a deathly feeling of faintness, I began to slip from the saddle and choking, I said, "How did you know?"

"You have that nice Jewish look about you," he said in a shrill voice, hopping on one leg and leaving the thin dog's trail behind him. "That nice Jewish look, sir."

His fussing had a sense of death about it, and I had quite a job fending him off. It took me some time to come to, as though I had had a concussion. The staff officer ordered me to see to the machine guns and rode off. The machine guns were being dragged up a hill, like calves on halters. They moved side by side, like one herd, and clanked reassuringly. The sun played on their dusty barrels, and I saw a rainbow on the metal.

The young Pole with the curly sideburns looked at them with peasant curiosity. He leaned right forward, thus giving me a view of Golov as he crawled out of the ditch, weary and pale, with his battered head, and his rifle raised. I stretched out my hand toward him and shouted, but the sound stuck in my throat, to choke and swell there. Golov quickly shot the prisoner in the back of the head and jumped to his feet. The startled Pole swung around to him, turning on his heels as though obeying an order on parade. With the slow movement of a woman giving herself to a man, he raised both hands to the back of his neck, slumped to the ground, and died instantly.

A smile of relief and satisfaction now came over Golov's face. His

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cheeks quickly regained their color. "*Our* mothers don't knit pants like that for us," he said to me slyly. "Scratch one and give me that list for the other eight."

"I gave him the list and said despairingly, "You'll answer for all this, Golov."

"I'll answer for it, all right!" he shouted with indescribable glee. "Not to you, spectacles, but to my own kind, to the people from Sormovo! They know what's what."

The prisoners are dead. I feel it in my bones.

This morning, I decided I must do something in memory of them. Nobody else but me would do this in the Red Cavalry. Our unit has camped in a devastated Polish country estate. I took my diary and went into the flower garden, which was untouched. Hyacinths and blue roses were growing there.

I began to make notes about the corporal and the nine dead men. But I was immediately interrupted by a noise—an all-too-familiar noise. Cherkashin, the staff today, was plundering the bee-hives. Mitia, who had pink cheeks and came from Orel, was following him, with a smoking torch in his hands. They had wrapped greatcoats around their heads. The slits of their eyes were ablaze. Myriads of bees were trying to fight off their conquerors and were dying by their hives. And I put aside my pen. I was horrified at the great number of memorials ahead of me.

(*Translated from the Russian by* MAX HAYWARD)

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Irving Howe

THE POLITICS OF DISASTER

Like many other people, I have been reading the recent literature on the history and politics of Vietnam. It is a depressing experience, which bears out once more de Tocqueville's remark that "a true but complicated idea has always less chance of succeeding than one which is false but simple."

For political mythologists, Vietnam presents an unambiguous picture. The spokesmen for Washington, fixated upon their anti-Communist crusade, and the apologists for Hanoi, fixated upon the vocabulary of anti-imperialism, tell pretty much the same kind of story: monolithic, brute, devoid of those complexities we know to be the texture of political life wherever it can emerge with some freedom. The more one reads about Vietnam, the more one is tempted to cry out, *How appalling they have been on both sides!* So I write here not as an expert, but as someone trying, no doubt with errors, to scrape some meaning from what the experts report.

1946

Looking back upon the history of modern imperialism, one cannot avoid the ironic reflection that even among oppressors there are crucial distinctions. The British in India were economic cut-throats and racialist snobs, yet somehow, even if involuntarily, another side of British experience and thought got through to the Indians. Partly because of the penetration of British radicalism (the London School of Economics served as a preparatory school for the Indian nationalists), and partly because of the training provided by the British Civil Service, the Indians were able to create an indigenous political movement, the Congress party of Gandhi and Nehru, which sank its roots into the countryside and gained the assent of the intelligentsia.

Why did not the same thing happen in the French colonies, or even in certain other British colonies? I am not quite sure, but I would speculate that in France there has always remained a segment of a military-social elite which could not reconcile itself to the idea of a democratic

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republic and found an outlet in the colonies for its authoritarian energies. While not as racialist as the British, the French colonial overseers established themselves in greater independence from the home governments in Paris and could therefore rule more freely in accord with their fundamental outlook—an outlook that combined repressive authoritarianism with a measure of cultural proselytizing.

French colonialism found its rationale in fantasies of glory; British colonialism in fantasies of uplift. Both were self-deluding, yet the differences would prove to be important. Fantasies can become or shape realities. Something of British democracy seeped past British imperialism into Indian society, whereas in Indochina, despite an intensive cultural "Frenchifying" among the landowners and intellectuals, there was not permitted even a feeble carbon of the democratic process. In Indochina, specifically, the colonialists formed a semi-feudal caste free to exploit the country.

A disaster; and now, as hostages of history, we pay for it.

The Vietnamese, as they emerge from the pages of Fall, Scigliano, Hammer, Lacouture, and Buttinger seem a marvelously attractive people: subtle, charming, clever. They have a history of repeated struggle against French imperialism, from the late 19th century until the Second World War, and a far longer history of resistance against Chinese imperialism. They have thrown up obscure figures of heroism, romantic nationalists who remind one a little of the 19th-century Polish nationalists in doomed revolt against the Czar. For the Vietnamese, as for the Poles, nationalism became a mystique, and from a mystique it could easily decline into a cabal. The plots of the Vietnamese nationalists, most of them sons of mandarins and middle bourgeoisie, fail repeatedly, and most of all, because they do not reach the Vietnamese people, either the peasants or the urban population.

For this failure to strike social roots there are at least two reasons. The French circumscribe Vietnamese nationalism into the desperate isolation of cafe and exile, thereby preventing it from taking on the breadth and maturity of Indian nationalism. The French succeed in keeping the nationalists cut off from their own nation—without realizing that thereby the nation will be driven to rise up without, and even against, the nationalists.

The other reason for the claustrophobic, pre-modern character of Vietnamese nationalism has to do with Vietnam itself. The aristocratism of the mandarins, like that of the Polish landowners in the late 19th century, dominates the political style of Vietnamese nationalism. There are in Vietnam few, if any, *narodnik* or populist inclinations; the nation-

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alists mean to act for, but not through, the nation. And what is more, by the 20th century Vietnam is barely a coherent and functioning nation, any more than Poland could be said to be a coherent and functioning nation at the turn of the century. Vietnam is a hope for a nation, to be established once the French are driven into the sea. But meanwhile the nationalist intelligentsia lacks social roots, popular support, authentic experience. It knows little of the lessons absorbed by Gandhi, Nehru, and, in a perverted way, even Sukarno. These Vietnamese nationalists are trapped in their traditional dependence on mandarin elitism; their ingrained respect for Chinese and French culture; their oscillation between careers in the French civil service, which can be fairly comfortable, and sudden outbreaks of rebellion, which can lead to prison and exile. All through the 1920's and 1930's the French colonialists and Vietnamese nationalists play by more or less fixed rules—with the proviso that one side has the power and the other not.

There is a further tragedy. The Vietnamese nationalists, often men of heroism and purity, see in their nationalism . . . nothing but nationalism. It is virtually without social content, authentic or false social content; without, say, the village democracy of Gandhi or the humanitarian socialism of Nehru. Again, like the 19th-century Polish nationalists, their bias is unconsciously conservative: they cannot even imagine anything else, and they fail to see the deep connection between French rule and the privileges of the native elite from which most of them derive.

Historically they are squeezed in a nutcracker between the colonialism of yesterday and the totalitarianism of tomorrow. They have nothing to offer against these, except the martyred cry of their nation, and soon enough the Communists take over even this, for at the very least the Communists understand that for the national goal to be reached it must contain more than mere nationalism. The tragedy of the Vietnamese nationalists is that they are 19th-century nationalists trying to move from the 17th century into the 20th century, while their French masters and teachers are 18th-century absolutists.

Let us avoid mythology. Brilliant leader that he would become, Ho Chi Minh was deeply implicated in the fiascos and deceits of Stalinist policy in Asia during the 1920's and 1930's. But history—by which, concretely, I mean first the French and then the Vietnamese nationalists—would give him and his party the rare privilege of a second and then a third chance. For as it turned out, the Communists were the only political force in Vietnam that functioned according to the premises of modern politics. They alone saw the need to speak to the quiescent mass of the people and to stir them with slogans blending national and social

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goals. They alone created cadres that would combine a monolithic discipline from above with the manipulation of an untutored population below.

Against such competition, the apolitical Vietnamese nationalists, for all their sincere parochialism, were helpless. And it is probably this parochialism which explains their failure to throw up a true national hero: for none of their leading figures, whatever his ability, could break past French restraints and grow into the role of national leadership.

The decisive moment occurs immediately after the collapse of Japanese domination at the end of the Second World War. Communist leaders in exile quickly make their way home, especially in North Vietnam, to join their cadres in the villages, with whom they had maintained a functioning underground organization during the war; while the nationalist leaders remain exiles in China, wasting precious weeks until they will return with the hated Chinese armies. The delay proves fatal. And more than fatal: it is profoundly symptomatic. For the Communists alone grasp the need for building a movement with extensive social roots in the countryside, and beginning now, as well as through the war against the French, they transform themselves into a popular movement by means of their identification with the national cause. That they will gain the support of a majority of Vietnamese may be doubted, and has, in any case, never been demonstrated through a free election; but that they will soon be the most powerful Vietnamese movement, with strong popular support, cannot be doubted.

The French, too, contribute to the growing strength of Vietnamese Communism. In an appalling miscalculation they look upon Ho Chi Minh as "reasonable" and upon the non-Communist nationalists as intractable, and proceed to intermittent cooperation with the Communists in breaking the back of the nationalist and Trotskyist groups.

The Trotskyists, quite strong in the Saigon region and the winning party in the 1939 Cochin China election, are now, in the spring of 1946, brutally decimated by the Viet Minh, the Communist-led resistance movement. In the summer of 1946 the French supply Ho Chi Minh's second-in-command, General Giap, with artillery to wipe out pockets of resistance, led by the nationalist Dai Viet party against Communist domination in North Vietnam. The French in Hanoi also surround a section of the city to prevent members of the nationalist group VNQDD from coming to the aid of their leaders who, elsewhere in the city, are being rounded up by the Communists.

These are facts. And they are facts that ought to be considered by those Americans who cultivate the legend of "Uncle Ho," the benign leader.

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Yet the irony of it all is that not Ho Chi Minh but the French broke the alliance between Communists and colonialists. During the late forties and fifties, the Vietminh, rebuffed by the French, becomes the dominating force in the Vietnamese resistance; Ho Chi Minh, part of whose power was connived in by the French, now turns it against them. Yet in thereby helping liberate the nation, the Communists also destroy, at least in the North, its components of diversity and freedom, through a systematic liquidation of non-Communist nationalists. Creating an independent Vietnam, they create also an independent police state.

1954–56

Was there ever, after the Geneva Agreement, a significant chance for establishing South Vietnam as a viable country that would be non-Communist yet devoted to at least a measure of democratic freedom and social reform? Concerning such questions we of the democratic Left have our ready answers—answers, as our critics point out, not always to be distinguished from our fervent hopes. And we cannot in honesty be at all certain that our answers are always relevant. For clearly there are situations in which anti-democratic pressures from both Right and Left are so enormous, that the frail shoots of freedom cannot flourish or survive. The more I have read about Vietnam, the more convinced I have become that in its decisive particulars the situation there was sharply different from that of any other underdeveloped country. The nature of French imperialism; the political-social weaknesses of traditional Vietnamese nationalism; the accession to leadership in the resistance movement by the Communists (something that happens nowhere else); the open and hidden cooperation of the French and the Communists in slaughtering political dissidents immediately after the Second World War; and then the years of struggle between the Viet Minh and the French, brought on by the blindness and cupidity of the latter and leading to results that can only favor the former—all of this militates against a democratic outcome.

But one thing is certain: the failure to try a mixture of political liberty and social reform in South Vietnam made all but inevitable a victory for the Communists.

Here we ought to gain a clearer sense of Diem, a man who, with good reason, has been portrayed as a despot, but also, it should be remembered, a man about whom Ho Chi Minh once said that "he too in his way is a patriot." He never collaborated with the French, and though, like Sukarno, he did accept Japanese protection against the French, he never became a Japanese puppet either. Nor was Diem ever

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accused of personal corruption. As Ellen Hammer remarks in *The Struggle for Indochina*:

> For some 20 years Diem had remained aloof from the political scene, and, as a symbol of Nationalist intransigence . . . a certain legend had grown up around his name. . . . Unfortunately he came to power at a time when nationalism was no longer sufficient and nothing short of political genius would be enough to cope with the situation. . . .

In 1954, when an effort was made, largely under the aegis of the United States, to establish an independent South Vietnam, Diem defined himself politically not only as an anti-Communist but also as an authentic and progressive nationalist leading the opposition to the pro-French and Bao Dai elements in Saigon.

At this point, then, the United States extended support to Diem because it seemed that he, unstained by collaborationism, spoke for those Vietnamese nationalists who wanted an independent country in the South, a country that would be tied neither to the Communists in Hanoi nor to the French and their agents. Later the representatives of the State Department would refuse or be unable to grasp the need for intensive social reform as a precondition for the survival of South Vietnam; but they did at least understand that, unless there were an untainted nationalist at the head of the Saigon regime, there was not even a possibility that the new country could be established.

In 1954–5 Diem also won tentative support among whatever Left-liberal elements remained in Saigon; also the support of the 900,000 refugees, mostly Catholic peasants, who came from the North;* and even the support of certain non-Communist Vietnamese who had fought in the Viet Minh against the French but could not stomach the prospect of Ho's totalitarian state. The attitude of the bulk of the population in South Vietnam toward the Diem regime in 1954–5 is not easily determined. Obviously, there was no great enthusiasm, nor any reason for it. The impression of the most cautious observers is that a sizable portion of the people was at least prepared to wait and see what Diem would do before it took any decisive stand for or against him.

What South Vietnam did not yet have was the kind of institutional and economic infrastructure which a modern state needs, be it demo-

*Ellen Hammer writes about this migration: "The religious factor was undoubtedly an important one in their decision to leave, but it would seem that revulsion against forced labor and the tight economic and political controls and heavy levies imposed upon them by the Communists weighed heavily among refugees . . . It was clear not only that the exodus constituted a serious popular indictment of the northern [Communist] regime, but that it would have been multiplied several-fold had the refugees been permitted to leave freely."

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cratic or not. Nor did South Vietnam have the developed political movements a democratic society requires. The nationalist groups remaining in South Vietnam were small, broken, isolated from the countryside, and, above all, unsure of which course to follow. For all the reasons I have touched upon, there was neither a liberal nor social democratic movement which might have become the agent pressing for the reforms necessary in this new country—though there were elements holding to liberal and social democratic ideas which, had there been a reasonable interval of peace and an atmosphere of political freedom, might have grown into parties and movements.

At the outset Diem seemed on the way toward improvising a nation-state. He established a national administration; he began the physical reconstruction of the country; he managed to subdue the various private armies, some mere rackets and others a strange blend of racket and religious sect. It cannot be said that Diem had any strong social base in the country as a whole or any significant popular movement behind him; given the chaotic conditions of the past several decades, no political tendency in South Vietnam except the Communists could or did. But insofar as Diem's task was that of a pure and simple nationalist, he did —up to a point—fulfill his perspective.*

But the central fact was that Diem did not merely face the problem of nation-building; he had also to face an enormous social upheaval, a countryside that had been stirred into consciousness and revolt during the struggle against the French. He could thus satisfy his national ambitions *only if* he simultaneously undertook a social program—only, that is, if he acted against certain immediate economic interests of the landowning class from which many of his supporters came. It would have been far cheaper, in any effort at even a modest land reform, to compensate the landowners for property appropriated than to do what in effect was done:—a counterfeit "land reform" which did not seriously affect the relationship of power in the countryside but which led the peasants, rightly enough, to feel hostile toward the Saigon regime. This failure to

* It soon became clear that there could be no free or even rigged-cum-free election in the Communist North. Since the North had a majority of the population, this meant that even if something like a free election took place in the South and even if the Communists won only a small percentage of the vote, they would—with the mechanical majorities rolled up in the North—be bound to win in a nation-wide poll, *regardless of whether they really had the support of a majority of the people.*

On the other hand, if the regime in Saigon had been truly progressive and thereby able to garner some popular support, a call for a nation-wide election, both North and South, might have been politically advantageous. For by 1956 Ho Chi Minh, harrassed by a serious food problem and deeply in trouble with a recalcitrant peasantry, was apparently not at all eager for a genuine vote.

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abolish the burden of rent was all the more disastrous since the peasants had actually stopped paying rent during the recent years of turmoil; so that the Diem regime not merely withheld an improvement they expected but reinstated a burden they believed themselves rid of.

Now it can be said, with obvious cogency, that the class ties and outlook of the Diem regime made such reform unlikely. That is quite true. Yet we have witnessed several instances during the past half-century in which land reform of varying effectiveness has been carried out by non-socialist regimes partly against the interests of sections of the ruling classes. Land reform, after all, does not mean the socio-economic liquidation of a ruling class; it means an incursion upon, or limitation of, and sometimes merely a redirection of its economic power. In Mexico, India, Formosa and Japan there have been programs of land reform—all countries with sharply different circumstances, yet all granting some landless peasants at least some satisfaction of their hunger for land. After achieving independence India undertook a program of acquiring the vast properties owned by the petty princes; these properties then became subject to the laws of the Indian states limiting the amount of land individuals could own and distributing surpluses. The national program for land redistribution was enacted under the guidance, as it happens, of a conservative bourgeois politician, Sardar Patel, who understood that if India was to survive, at least some redistribution of the land was necessary. I am not saying that the results have been satisfactory, or that there do not remain large numbers of landless peasants in India; but what was done in India could have been tried in South Vietnam, where the political need for such measures was even greater.

As for Japan and Formosa, the land reform programs there were more thorough-going than in most countries that have been troubled by a land problem. The relevance of these experiences is somewhat limited, since in both countries land reform was instituted by military occupations, the U.S. in Japan and Chiang Kai-Shek in Formosa, so that it was possible to override the objections of the old landowners and ignore their political influence. But in South Vietnam during the Diem period the U.S. probably had almost as decisive a voice as it did in Japan during the MacArthur occupation. And what is crucial is that, despite platonic commitments to land reform and paper programs in behalf of it, the U.S. did not press Diem in this direction. On the contrary, it enabled Diem to stay in power through a virtually unqualified commitment of money and military aid, and by threatening his opponents that if they overthrew Diem such aid would be withdrawn. Apart from whether one approves of such a relationship between an immense power and a tiny nation, the fact remains that the U.S. could

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have pressured the South Vietnamese into land reform but failed to do so.

The real issue in South Vietnam during the years 1954 through 1956 was whether a nationalist leadership which had managed precariously to establish the beginnings of nationhood would have the social intelligence to see that if it did not institute some reform, even its national aspirations would be frustrated. If it did not act to limit and confine certain class interests with which it was linked, then both the class and the national leadership would lose everything.

Was the Indian Patel more generous or humanitarian than the Vietnamese Diem? I doubt it—and what does it matter? Patel, however, grasped the critical fact that for the survival of a newly-independent country like India under Congress party rule, the interests of the princely landowners had to be clipped. Diem lacked this kind of understanding. There were, to be sure, obvious and enormous differences in their situations: the Indians were not faced with a Communist competitor commanding a network of underground agents and enjoying popular support. Which was all the more reason for Diem, simply out of nationalist commitment, to take bold social steps and transcend the limitations of his political outlook. There were people both in Vietnam and abroad who kept urging this upon the regime; but their advice was not taken.

What I wish to stress here is that there was nothing historically ordained in this failure, either on the part of the South Vietnamese or the United States. Historical reasons for it, historical pressures in behalf of it, historical probabilities pointing toward it—yes. But choices there were, choices involving social imagination and political grasp. Even if the right course had been taken, with liberty in the cities and land reform in the countryside, the odds would still have been heavily against the survival of an independent South Vietnam. But there would have been a decidedly better chance.

More than class interest was involved in the failure of the Diem regime. It was in the grip of a narrow social outlook derived from its mandarin origins; and this narrow outlook made it both intensely devoted to its image of the national interest and utterly incapable of grasping the central fact of modern politics: that whether democratic, totalitarian or authoritarian, *modern politics is a mass of politics*. The masses may be aroused to participate democratically, or through totalitarian ritual and mock-action; but participate they do. Diem, still in the grip of mandarin paternalism as well as an old-style Catholic absolutism, could not act upon such an understanding of modern politics even to the extent that figures like Sukarno and Nasser could.

Since, however, the social issues churning in Vietnamese life were

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not to be brushed aside; since they co-existed with problems of nation-building, and indeed were indistinguishable from them; Diem's failure to confront these social issues meant that he was in effect cutting himself off from the people. It meant that his idea of the nation could be imposed only by suppressing the social issues—that is, by establishing an authoritarian regime. At its most serious, before it degenerated into a mere family oligarchy and racket, Diemism signified an utterly doomed effort to fulfill a 19th-century vision of nationalism in a context where the social problems of the 20th century had burst into full bloom. Diem therefore had no alternative—given his political outlook—but an imposition of *a politics from above*. He would create a nation despite and then in opposition to the people. The rationale Diem gave for suppressing democracy was not very different from that offered by dictators like Nkrumah or quasi-Maoists like Paul Sweezey: that the conditions were not yet "ripe" for anything else.

To all of this, one qualification needs to be added. Diem and his clique did try—since they had some glimmer of awareness—to impose an ideology of sorts upon South Vietnam. They imported a version of Left-Catholic "personalism" from France, which they then twisted into authoritarian channels; they set up organizations along semi-corporatist lines, borrowing the techniques which Chiang had tried in China during the thirties and which had in turn been copied from Mussolini; they created the appearance of participation (mass rallies, reeducation centers, etc.). How then were they different from the Communists? In at least two ways. The Diemists lacked the tried and selfless cadres which the Communists had built up over decades: men idealistic, ruthless and corrupt, devoted to the mystique of totalitarianism and the language of equality. And secondly, the Diemists had nothing to offer the peasants, as by contrast the Communist-led Viet Minh did. In short, Diemism could enjoy neither the moral advantages of democracy nor the practical advantages of totalitarianism. Thus, Diem was forced to ape the repressive methods of the Comunists without being able to copy those of their methods that won them the allegiance of peasants and intellectuals.

Moreover, Diem soon launched a campaign of repression in the countryside against the former Viet Minh fighters and thereby contributed to a resumption of civil war. By the end of 1956 it was clear that for the scatter of democrats in South Vietnam there was no honorable course but opposition to Diem. But of one thing I am convinced: that the idea of trying in the mid-fifties to create a democratic-reformist alternative—however precarious and difficult— to both Ho Chi Minh and the puppet Emperor Bao Dai was in the interests of the Vietnamese.

This conviction has been fortified by reading Jean Lacouture's book,

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which makes clear that in South Vietnam during the middle and late fifties there were nascent political forces—if only they had been given time to regroup and mature!—which might have provided the kind of leadership the country needed. For it is not true, it is a falsehood perpetrated by the apologists for Hanoi, that the country was totally polarized between Ho and Diem. Intermediary political groups in the South were weak and confused; they would be crushed before they had a chance to go through any experience of political clarification; but they did exist. If Diem antagonized the peasants, he also destroyed those political elements in the cities that had a more intelligent approach to the peasants. Lacouture offers a description of the various groups, ranging from the Cao Dai sect to the trade unions which, like the Buddhists, did not know where to turn.* Still, what one can see in South Vietnam during these years was an effort to improvise an uneasy union of Eastern tradition and Western ideas. Had South Vietnam been able to enjoy twenty years of relative peace, there might have developed equivalents to Nehru or Betancourt or Mehta—why not? The Vietnamese had the intelligence and sophistication. But everyone with power, from Ho to Diem, from France to the United States, made certain that no such development would occur. Together they created the tragedy of Vietnam.

Coda: *The writing of history is, among other things, the description of missed opportunities. To look back upon the last two decades of Vietnamese life is to annotate the wastage of possibilities. How large or real were those possibilities? Was it probable or even likely that a South Vietnam initiating some land reform and allowing for a modest democratic life could have become a viable society? I do not see how such a question can be answered with any assurance. A few things, however, can be said:* a) Time is of the essence. *A land reform in 1955 would have been worth ten times as much as a land reform in 1965. A free political life in 1955 might have done for South Vietnam what a free political life could no longer do in 1965.*

b) Retrospective wisdom is valuable, *if only because it may possibly pre*

*An editor of DISSENT, scrutinizing an earlier version of this essay, raised the question: "But you yourself said it was necessary to suppress the para-military forces of the Cao Dai and Hoa Hoa sects; can you then propose that they then be allowed to function freely as part of the national life?" Yes, precisely. To create a modern nation it was necessary to suppress the particularistic *military* power of the sects. Yet once this was done, the sects remained, and had to remain, an important element in the country's life. In his own distorted way, even Diem understood that they had now to be absorbed and allowed to participate in the social-political life of the country; but he did this in an authoritarian and destructive way. To have done it democratically would obviously have been difficult, extremely difficult; *but then, so was everything in South Vietnam difficult!*

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vent the repetition of disaster. Even if the peculiar conjuncture of circumstances in South Vietnam made a democratic course unlikely, there was the possibility, at the outset, of building on narrow foundations and then, with international help, of creating a more solid infrastructure of political and social institutions. Slender as that possibility may seem—and both the realpolitik Right and authoritarian Left gloat in minimizing the possibility—it is the political and moral obligation of radical democrats to keep stressing that the possibility was there.

c) There are no guarantees in politics, *only chances for better or worse.*

1956–66

The aspect of the Vietnam conflict that is least thoroughly discussed in the studies thus far written is the role of the United States. At least in respect to the earlier years, it is hard to find a pattern of American interventionism that conforms to a coherent master plan, either benevolent or malicious. So far as one can tell—later investigations may change the picture—U.S. involvement in Vietnam came about mainly as the result of drift and without much awareness of likely consequences. I very much doubt that when U.S. troops began to be sent to Vietnam in 1961, there was a clear understanding in Washington of the ultimate consequences.

The motivating ideology behind this interventionist drift was, however, much firmer in nature: it was the kind of anti-Communism which, with variations, has been U.S. policy since the Truman Administration. The U.S. intervention in Vietnam was thus, from the beginning, seriously complicated by the cold-war struggle with China. There can be no question that the idea of "stopping the Chinese" and perhaps of establishing bases in proximity to Communist China gave U.S. intervention in Vietnam a "hard" military character, in which lip service was paid to the need for social reform but the local requirements of Vietnamese society were subordinated to the big-power confrontation.

In Vietnam itself U.S. diplomacy continued its traditional policy of relying upon established power, which in this case meant Diem. Some of the policy-makers in Washington would no doubt have preferred a more liberal regime in Saigon, but they acted according to the view appropriate enough in a stable world or in a pre-modern politics, that power is a visible reality which has to be accepted wherever and however it exists. That an apparently stable structure of power can disintegrate rapidly, they surely knew as well as we do; but by training, temperament, and tradition they were not equipped to act upon this knowledge. Between what some of them knew intellectually and the way in which most of them acted practically, there was a chasm.

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At one point there were drawn up by certain U.S. technical experts plans for land reform in South Vietnam similar to the one successfully introduced in Japan. These came to nothing, partly because the political figures under whom the experts worked failed to grasp that in South Vietnam the problem of land reform was far more than a technical-administrative matter; it had become a burning political issue. And partly these plans came to nothing because the U.S. embassy, both during the time it kept Diem in power and after it drove him out, had no authentic conviction that such things matter crucially. The idea of land reform took on a decorative function—as later, in the rhetoric of Johnson and Humphrey, it would be reduced to absurdity. Like most decorations, it depreciated in value through careless use. Once the balance of power in the U.S. "presence" within South Vietnam shifted increasingly to the military and the CIA, there was a predictable inclination to rely still more heavily upon military "realism"—which meant upon those Vietnamese generals who, while political cretins, spoke the language of blunt might.

By 1961, it now seems clear, the jig was up. The political situation had deteriorated disastrously, and, as usual, the United States tried to undo political failure with military might—of which the consequences would be a magnification of the failure and a new phase in the shedding of blood. Once American troops began to be sent, that signified the decisive failure of American policy. And the sending of troops was to lead, in effect, to a deepening of the political crisis and a worsening of its consequences. I do not hold to an unqualified opposition to military interventionism under any and all circumstances, but the predisposition of radical democrats should be *strongly* against military intervention, on the ground that it almost always comes as a last-ditch effort to rescue a failed and/or deplorable policy. Such was the case in 1961, the small beginning of a large disaster.

Now it may be argued that the inadequacy of U.S. policy consisted in the fact that it either intervened too much or not enough. Obviously the U.S. made its power felt; given the relationship of forces, it was impossible for anything else to happen. But the U.S. never chose, in a decisive fashion, to pressure South Vietnamese governments for a policy of reform. Such a course would have meant, in practice, to exert an increasing political influence, but it might also have been a way of escaping the disintegration which would prompt the Johnson Administration to decide upon military intervention.

As it was, U.S. policy gained the fruits neither of appropriate pressure nor of genuine non-involvement—either of which would have

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been better, both in terms of democratic values and practical necessities, than the course actually pursued.

The result of the policy actually pursued by the U.S. has been twofold: first, that whichever clique held power for a time in Saigon could pretty much count on American acquiescence (the one exception apparently being a short-lived semi-neutralist cabinet of the civilian Dr. Quat); and second, that each Saigon regime could assume that, because of the political limitations the U.S. representatives had imposed upon themselves, they were not finally going to exert the kinds of pressures that might discommode their clients in Saigon. Diem and Ky were puppets, yet puppets can sometimes act with a notable freedom of maneuver.

For Left-liberal critics of U.S. policy, all this poses some difficult problems. If, for example, you chose to attack the U.S. for having supported Diem, is not this to imply that you would have wanted the U.S. to support another regime, say that of Mr. X? But to have supported the regime of Mr. X might have meant a deeper political involvement—and it is simply disingenuous not to recognize that deeper political involvement carries with it a risk of military intervention, even if the former is justified as a way of obviating the latter. (For example, to give economic support to Zambia in the present Rhodesian crisis *does* involve a risk of military intervention at a later point.) Now it is possible to say, as do certain leftists, that anything the U.S. might do in Vietnam or anywhere else had, ineluctably, to be reactionary. But to say that is, in effect, to limit radical criticism to a "demand" for socialism: highly desirable but not quite immediately to the point. And it is also to make incomprehensible the fact that even the most ultra-radicals do in fact make demands upon—that is, proposals for—U.S. foreign policy.

I see no choice but to acknowledge the inescapability of U.S. economic and political power, which is to say, the inescapability, within the framework of the world as it now is, of U.S. economic and political influence. Saying this, I would immediately add that democratic radicals ought to have a strong predisposition against military intervention, for some of the reasons Michael Walzer and John Schrecker have suggested in an earlier DISSENT. Yet there cannot really be, in the present situation, a policy of absolute isolationism, and the people who argue for it at one point are usually among the first to deplore it at another. What matters, within the boundaries of inherently unsatisfactory relationships, is the political content, character, limitation, and decorum of the influence.

The problems remain very sticky, and you can discard them either by resorting to a Humphrey type of rhetoric, which is to justify whatever is done by the men in power, or by shouting "imperialist," which too often justifies whatever is done by other men in power. But for radical

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democrats it is necessary to acknowledge, even if we cannot solve, such problems as these:

> *Is our criticism of U.S. policy in Vietnam that it tried to influence the direction of that country's economic and social policies or that it did so in a reactionary way?*
>
> *Assuming that one would have favored a policy of advocating reforms in Vietnam during the late fifties, can one seriously have expected conservative generals and politicians to carry them through? Can revolutionary changes be effected by non-revolutionists?*

The first question I have already discussed briefly. As to the second, our answer is, obviously, no. But the term "revolution" is bandied about a little too much these days in academic circles. What was needed in South Vietnam during the late fifties was not a socialist revolution, for which neither the economy nor the politics of the country was ready, but a policy of serious reform, both on the land and in the cities. Toward this end, pressure was possible. For example, in the elections for the national assembly held in Saigon in 1959, the Diemists were roundly beaten in Saigon but an opposition candidate was nevertheless denied his seat. (They ordered these things more efficiently in the North.) Precisely this kind of outrage could have been privately and publicly attacked by the U.S., as in fact it was attacked by liberals and democratic radicals at the time.

What happened instead everyone knows, and since we have discussed recent Vietnamese events in several issues of DISSENT and I am not pretending to write a full-scale political account, I need not here go into detail. The U.S. chose repeatedly to throw its weight behind one or another right-wing group or military junta which promised stability and prosecution of the war. Having decided that Diem had outlived his usefulness, the U.S. had him replaced; but because it had acquiesced in his earlier destruction of the political life of South Vietnam, there were no popular leaders to replace him, and the U.S. found itself accepting generals even less acceptable than Diem. Then, having decided upon massive military steps, the U.S. "had" to pursue military tactics which meant indiscriminate bombings of the civilian population, because it lacked the political support among the people of the countryside which would have enabled it to cope with guerrillas in any other way; but then, because it adopted these tactics, it no doubt further alienated large numbers of Vietnamese. Having stumbled, then raced, into a military adventure from which there seems no ready exit, the Johnson Administration began to develop a rationale of blatant imperialist ideology, a sort of Monroe Doctrine for Asia.

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Behind this policy was a complex of motives and forces: ingrained U.S. conservatism, contempt for non-whites, simplistic anti-Communist mania, political ineptitude, native moralism, and more. It can lead only to further bloodshed and perhaps enlarged warfare. Is there any reason to suppose that the outcome of the recent U.S. policy of support for Ky and against the Buddhists will come to anything else? Once again, as in the 1950's, there seemed a possibility of sorts that an indigenous political life could be nurtured in South Vietnam, a political life that is ultimately the only bulwark—if any bulwark remains—against indefinite U.S. occupation or a Communist victory. And once again the U.S. acquiesced in the policy of the generals.

Any democrat who reads the histories of modern Vietnam cannot avoid a feeling of profound depression. That this martyred country can have a future in which it will either not be napalm-bombed into extinction or subdued to the ghastly silence of totalitarianism now seems unlikely. The crimes of the past reverberate; error multiplies; deceit abounds. Perhaps, through failure and blindness, it is too late for freedom in South Vietnam; then, at least, let there be some kind of peace.

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Joseph Buttinger

THREE PAGES FROM VIETNAMESE HISTORY

We print below three brief sections from the forthcoming two-volume history of colonial and postcolonial Vietnam, entitled VIETNAM: A DRAGON EMBATTLED, *copyright © by Joseph Buttinger, to be published by Frederick A. Praeger in January, 1967. (Most of the footnotes are here omitted.)*

1. The Betrayal of the French Left

The Indochina War was, no doubt, one of the great errors of French policy in this century. That is why the question of responsibility for this costly and futile venture will agitate all students of contemporary history for a long time to come. Why did the French lack the insight, possessed by the British and acquired slowly also by the Dutch, that the age of Western domination of Asia was coming to an end?

Although none of the major political parties, including the Communists,[1] is free from blame for the failure to prevent the Indochina War, the forces chiefly responsible for its outbreak, and even more for its duration, are the parties of the non-Communist Left. It was they who ruled France during the first crucial postwar years; it was under their leadership that the fateful decisions that made this war inevitable were taken. The parties of the Left, with all the power they needed to oppose the imperialist aspirations of the Right, embraced these aspirations and turned the government of the Fourth Republic into a tool of France's reactionary colonial party. They adopted the interpretation, advanced by the parties of the Right and by colonial society, of the Vietminh as a solidly Communist movement; they tolerated d'Argenlieu's sabotage of the March agreement, condoned General Valluy's provocative actions, and with their pettiness at the conference table destroyed the chance for a more lasting agreement at Fontainebleau. Nothing was done by the leftist governments of France to strengthen the forces of non-Communist nationalism in Vietnam; on the contrary, it was with French help that the Vietminh succeeded in almost wiping out these forces. And with arguments entirely borrowed from the Right,

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the leftist governments of France rejected all Vietminh offers for re-establishing peace after the war had spread over the entire country. It has been said again and again that during the period when a solution without war was still possible, France had no Indochinese policy at all. The truth is that there was a definite policy, the rightist policy of colonial reconquest, and that the Left, in control of the government but lacking a policy of its own, adopted the catastrophic course advocated by the Right.

Most significant for the failure of the Left to impose the liberal intentions it frequently voiced toward Vietnam was the role played during these years by the Socialist party of France. A study of the statements made by men like Léon Blum and Guy Mollet, and of congress resolutions adopted by the party between 1945 and 1953, proves that from 1945 on, of the major political groups, the Socialists alone had an adequate answer to the problems created for France by the Vietnamese national revolution. During 1946, the Socialists consistently opposed d'Argenlieu's policy of sabotage of the March agreement. After the war had become general, Léon Blum, as temporary Premier, recognized the right of the Vietnamese to national freedom, and openly proclaimed the old colonial system as finished. All during the years 1947 and 1948, when the government declined to enter into peace negotiations with Ho Chi Minh, Socialist party congresses kept demanding such negotiations. Gradually, the party began to embrace the concept of total independence for Vietnam, and its press became more and more outspoken in its criticism of the policy France was pursuing. Yet the Socialist Cabinet members, as long as they codetermined, and even directed, French policy toward Indochina, consistently acted contrary to these enlightened views. Well-disposed critics, therefore, called the Socialists prisoners of the colonial party; angry Vietnamese accused them of being accomplices.

One argument has always been offered to explain why the Socialists, in principle opposed to French policy in Vietnam, cooperated effectively in its execution: For compelling inner-political reasons, the Socialists clung to the strong position they had gained in the governments of liberated France; as long as their coalition partners preferred them to cooperation with parties of the Right, the Socialists looked at participation in the government as an obligation toward their electorate which they could not disregard. If they had made independence for Vietnam a condition for maintaining the coalition with the Radicals and the MRP, these parties would have formed governments supported by rightist parties two years before they actually did.

This holds true for most leading Socialists—men like Felix Gouin,

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Paul Ramadier, and Jules Moch—for the simple reason that France was closer to them than was Vietnam. Theirs was a position of painful compromise; they themselves regarded their attitude as a necessary sacrifice but did not feel that it was a betrayal of Vietnam.

This defense cannot be made of the Socialist Marius Moutet, who, during the most critical period before and after the outbreak of the war, was Minister of Overseas Affairs. Moutet's prominence derived entirely from the role he played as one of the personalities who shaped and defended French colonial policy after World War II. There is, of course, no need to question Moutet's motivation. It was obviously political, and although the role he played was hardly creditable, nothing is to be gained by doubting his integrity. But Moutet's thinking, like that of many of his colleagues, suffered from the main defect of all moderately successful Socialist leaders of our time: their belief that the cause of their parties can be served through participation in governments even if this obliges them to act contrary to their professed principles and specific programs. It is a fallacy to believe that the evils of a policy one knows to be wrong can be reduced by taking its execution into one's own hands, a fallacy based on the assumption that motives in politics are in the end more important than behavior. Moutet no doubt believed that French policy in Indochina, although steadily evolving toward the necessity of conducting a colonial war, would be a less disastrous and less reprehensible policy if presided over by a known friend of the colonial peoples instead of by an aggressive colonialist.

Thus Moutet became a prisoner of the colonial party. And once he had allowed this to happen, he could act, and defend his actions, only as an accomplice of this party. Throughout his career as Minister of Overseas Affairs, he did so with diminishing restraint. There is only one alternative to the assumption that he consciously betrayed the cause for which he had earlier, often effectively, fought: He had entered a trap which, after it had closed on him, he could not help but regard as a freely chosen place. However, he thought that he was free to do what he liked only because he had come to accept as right what his position as spokesman of France's colonial policy forced him to say and do. He ended by believing that the aims of France in Vietnam could be achieved only by making war.

Most of Moutet's colleagues supported his policy with grave misgivings—like a woman who accepts an unwelcome pregnancy hoping for a miscarriage. Many felt that if the Socialists in the government could not persuade their coalition partners to abandon the policy of colonial reconquest, they could at least slow down the ongoing campaign of aggression and, if an opportunity arose, seize it and impose their own

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solution. But this was an illusion, and the most outstanding leader of French Socialism, Léon Blum, a true proponent of freedom for Vietnam, also fell victim to it. Blum had the misfortune of heading the French government when hostilities broke out in Hanoi—an all-Socialist caretaker government that, as intended, lasted only a few weeks.[2] Obliged to speak as Premier of France, which, according to all reports from Saigon and Hanoi, had been attacked, Blum in a speech on December 23, 1946, based his justification of the policy of force on the dubious assertion that responsibility for the outbreak of the war lay entirely with the Vietminh. When he spoke thus, he did not know that Saigon was withholding from the Premier of France the peace proposals that Ho Chin Minh had addressed to him on December 15. Blum spoke movingly, and no doubt with a heavy heart, reiterating that in the end Vietnam must be given her freedom. He expressed his view that only negotiations could produce lasting and friendly relations between France and Vietnam. But he failed to see what had produced the war: not primarily the unfortunate methods practiced by the exponents of reconquest in Saigon and Paris, but the official aims of France as proclaimed in 1945, and firmly pursued during 1946. His failure to see that these aims called for the methods that were applied to him, too, a prisoner of the forces that determined French policy in Indochina after World War II.

The particular issue that trapped Blum and his party in December, 1946, was the seemingly plausible demand that the necessary condition for peace negotiations was the return of public order; only after order was re-established could the good intentions of France, which Blum undoubtedly nourished, become effective. But the Vietnamese knew that France had given no evidence of such intentions before the outbreak of the war. The demand for order could mean for them only that they must surrender or be militarily defeated before negotiations could be resumed. With his request for order Blum, therefore, stood in the forefront of the forces of aggression which he had so often denounced. Not only as a Socialist, but as a French statesman of integrity and foresight, he should have denounced these forces again, and he should have rejected the aims of France, whose pursuit was the chief cause of the existing disorder. Had he done so, his government would probably have lasted only four days instead of four weeks, but his party would not have become an accomplice of the many hypocrites in France who insisted that Vietnam could be given freedom only after French armies had again deprived her of it. It is even conceivable that Blum might have alerted his country and shortened the senseless Indochina War.

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2. Land Reform and Terror in North Vietnam

This is the story of the land reform in Communist North Vietnam, a story not only of economic failure, but also of unbelievable terror, of disastrous mismanagement on all Party levels, and of a crisis brought on by widespread popular discontent, which the regime was able to overcome only by a combination of brutal force and hasty political retreat.

The land policy of the Vietminh before 1953 had cautiously avoided frightening "rich peasants" or even "landlords" by raising the issue of land distribution. Both production and the war effort might have suffered from a radical program of agrarian reform. The only lands confiscated were those of "traitors," and the only reforms undertaken concerned land-rent reductions and lower interest rates for loans. That this restraint was a tactical one Truong Chinh, the Secretary of the Lao Dong party, put beyond all doubt in 1950, in a report which quite openly stated the ultimate goal of Communist land policy in North Vietnam: the socialization of agriculture.

The first steps of this radical approach to the land problem, which were decided upon in March, 1953, seemed not at all designed to promote the Party's real goal. They called for a redistribution of all land in favor of landless agricultural laborers and poor peasants, which was, to say the least, a very indirect move toward collectivization. But the Party knew that the road toward "socialized agriculture" would be long, and that a number of political problems would have to be solved before more direct steps toward its goal could be taken. One of these problems was how to abolish not only "landlordism," but also the basically anti-Communist class of the so-called rich peasants; another was to create a mass basis for the regime by gaining the gratitude and support of the landless and the poor peasants, who together formed the great majority of the rural population. They would own the land distributed by the regime. But the Communists foresaw that when all land was divided into more or less equal holdings, most families would still not own enough land. It was then that the peasant would have to be convinced of the necessity to collectivize agriculture.

Most revealing of the political motivation underlying the agrarian reform was the manner in which the actual distribution of land was organized. The rural population was divided into five categories: landlords, rich peasants, middle peasants, poor peasants, and landless agricultural laborers. However, the intention to take from the rich and give to the poor was only half of the scheme. In order to eliminate landlords and rich peasants as a social class, it was not enough to reduce them, through partial expropriation, to the status of middle or poor

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peasants. Since they were rightly regarded as enemies of Communism, and in particular of collectivized agriculture, they had to be eliminated from village life, if necessary physically. To this end, they were accused of all sorts of crimes, tried, sentenced to prison or forced labor, and the more unfortunate ones to death. The physical removal of as many as possible had another advantage. Those imprisoned or killed were of course totally dispossessed. The greater their numbers, the more land became available for distribution to those whom the Communists wished to win over.

Nothing in the history of Communist persecutions can equal the scheme contrived in North Vietnam to get rid of as many peasants as possible who owned more than 2 or 3 acres of land. As a prelude to the ugly spectacle of publicly trying and punishing these people, a hate-campaign was organized among the poor against the "rich," under the direction of specially trained Party cadres. Trial and punishment were not left to existing qualified courts but to People's Agricultural Reform Tribunals created for this purpose. They consisted of all the poor and landless of a village, and the trials became mass meetings dominated by people whose chances of obtaining land increased with every new conviction. This entailed classifying as many landowners as possible as landlords and rich peasants, and finding as many as possible guilty of crimes against the people and the state. But the trouble was that the North had always had few real landlords, and most of these had long been expropriated as "traitors." More than 60 per cent of all land was in the hands of peasants owning around 1 acre, and the number of "rich peasants" was bound to be small, unless those with 2–3 acres were classified as "rich." There was an embarrassing dearth of landlords. In many regions, therefore, the cadres could deliver the necessary quota of victims to the Agricultural Reform Tribunals only by promoting owners of as little as 2–4 acres to the status of "landlords." And in order to obtain enough sentences, either to prison or forced labor or death, crimes had to be invented and charges leveled, even against people who had always supported the Vietminh. There were of course many landowners who had cruelly exploited and mistreated the poor, but the Party was not interested in justice. Its aim was the eradication of a social class, and to this end it mobilized hate and greed, and the desire for personal vengeance. The entire procedure was designed not only to gain enough land to make distribution worthwhile, but also to make the poor peasants and the landless accomplices of the regime in the crimes committed against the "rich."

The first "wave" of land reform—a dress rehearsal in land distribution through "mass mobilization"—rolled over a few provinces in 1953,

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but fear that the action might get out of control and harm the war effort made the Vietminh leaders decide to call a halt. In 1955, however, when the war had ended and the regime's power was unchallenged, land reform through mass mobilization was resumed. In November, 1955, Truong Chinh initiated what he called "the fifth crucial wave of mass mobilization," freely admitting that the purpose of the reform was, as in Communist China, to gain mass support among the poor. On December 13, an official announcement said that over 100,000 persons had taken part in the trials and convictions of landlords in villages near Hanoi. The campaign was conducted "with utmost ferocity" in several more "waves," lasting until the fall of 1956, when it was called off on orders from above, apparently before the murderous momentum of the special cadres had exhausted itself.

Something about the campaign had been causing concern among the leaders in Hanoi for some time. On August 17, 1956, Ho Chi Minh, in a letter to his "Compatriots in the country," admitted "errors" in the execution of the land reform and promised "corrections." On August 24, the Party organ *Nhan Dan* reported that among the people wrongly classified, convicted, and executed were many former Vietminh fighters and even Party members. At the end of October, the head of the campaign, Truong Chinh, was dismissed as Party Secretary, and his post taken by Ho Chi Minh himself. The Minister of Agriculture was dismissed also. Party and government suddenly began to indulge in an orgy of self-criticism, and conducted what was officially called a "Campaign of Rectification of Errors," whose purpose had already been spelled out in Ho Chi Minh's letter of August 17. "Those who have been wrongly classified as landlords and rich peasants," he wrote, "will be correctly reclassified. Those members of the Party, the cadres, and the population who have been the subject of erroneous judgment will be re-established in their rights and prerogatives and their honorable character will be recognized." On November 1, the government announced that 12,000 persons would be released from prisons and labor camps. Radio Hanoi explained that all persons unjustly condemned, "whatever their class," would not only be freed but also compensated. Those among the unjustly punished who had held military or administrative posts would regain their civil rights and be reinstated in their former positions. On November 8, the government abolished the People's Agricultural Reform Tribunals.

In a speech delivered at Hanoi on November 28, Vo Nguyen Giap, the hero of Dien Bien Phu, defended the land-reform program but confirmed the "errors" committed and tried to regain the confidence of the many Party members and sympathizers who had been deprived

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of their possessions, jobs, and freedom, or, as he put it, had been "arrested, condemned, detained, isolated"—he did not mention those killed. It is generally believed that the number killed was between 10,000 and 15,000, and that between 50,000 and 100,000 were deported and imprisoned. Many regained their freedom, though perhaps not their former rights and possessions, but the campaign of Rectification of Errors had its limitations, since, as Ho Chi Minh grimly remarked: "One cannot wake the dead." As a substitute, the government offered decent graves and public funerals for the many whom its eager servants had deprived of their lives. Such public repentance, however, did not diminish the leaders' secret satisfaction over the social changes brought about by their agrarian reform. As Giap proclaimed in his speech defending the reform, all vestiges of "feudalism" had been eradicated, which in reality meant that a large peasant class likely to oppose the regime's plan to collectivize agriculture had ceased to exist.

What the agrarian reform had failed to accomplish was to satisfy the land needs of those for whose benefit it allegedly was undertaken. The total land gained through the reform enabled the regime to give 1.5 million families of landless agricultural laborers and poor peasants slightly more than 1 acre each. (They also received 1 buffalo for every 13 families.) Welcome as these gifts were to the poor, they were not bountiful enough to turn them into enthusiastic supporters of the regime.

Far from improving the regime's position among the rural population, the land reform, and above all the injustices and atrocities committed in its execution, produced widespread popular resentment, growing unrest, and eventually open rebellion. The brutalities of the land-reform cadres embittered not only their helpless victims, but also many peasants who were lucky enough to escape prison or execution by owning half an acre less than an unfortunate neighbor. Many sons of so-called landlords had fought for years in the Vietminh armies, and even if they themselves were spared persecution, the fate of their families drove most of them into opposition. Party members who were personally hit spoke up loudly, and in many instances became the most effective leaders of peasant opposition. Apart from the "errors" committed through the land reform, there was discontent also with the high taxes and the increasing pressure for ever bigger food deliveries to the state at prices so low that the peasant could not possibly have bought consumer goods even had they been available.

The regime, long deaf to the voices of dissatisfaction over its agrarian policy, began at last to listen to them in the summer of 1956, suddenly aware of the dangers that threatened if it failed to curb the relentless zeal of the agents charged with reshaping village life. But the

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warnings it began to issue in August, and the measures began to take at the end of October, came too late. Open rebellion broke out early in November in the province of Nghe An, the more shocking as the population of this region had long been known to be strongly pro-Vietminh. The first acts of active peasant resistance occurred in only one village, on November 2, but within a few days more clashes between local militia and peasants broke out, spreading over an entire district and taking on the form of a broadening spontaneous insurrection. Hanoi, although quickly reacting with measures that virtually ended the land reform, nevertheless also proceeded immediately to suppress the movement by force. This task, which turned out to be a bloody one, was entrusted to the 325th Division, whose members, long accustomed to fighting only the French, undoubtedly disliked shooting at Vietnamese peasants. Whether or not there was hesitation in their ranks is not known, but the task of suppressing the peasant rebels was in the end accomplished with customary Communist ruthlessness. Western observers claim that about 1,000 peasants were killed or wounded between November 10 and 20, and several thousand arrested and deported.

Smaller outbreaks occurred in other parts of the country, in some instances openly supported by embittered local Party leaders. Putting an end to the entire land reform campaign undoubtedly helped to prevent further outbreaks, but not until late February, 1957, did the regime feel safe enough to withdraw the regular army units from the affected areas and to hand over the task of maintaining order to the local militias.

For Ho Chi Minh, the beloved leader, having to use force against his own people, and predominantly in the province where he was born, must have been a distressing experience. But the many predictions of approaching doom for his regime, made by his enemies at home and abroad after the revolts of November, 1956, failed to come true. The excessive self-criticism in Giap's speech of November 29 should have disabused all peddlers of such vain hopes: Communists openly admit the existence of a crisis only after they have made sure that it no longer constitutes a threat to their power.

But the Communist regime in North Vietnam could afford to admit its own troubles and yet look with more confidence than ever before into the future for yet another reason. At the end of 1956, it had become clear to Ho Chi Minh that the hold he had gained over the Vietnamese people would not be threatened by developments in the other half of divided Vietnam. In the South, no progress was being made toward freedom or social justice. No truly progressive regime able to win over the entire Vietnamese people had arisen from the postwar political chaos in Saigon, and Ngo Dinh Diem showed no signs of ever

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becoming a serious rival to Ho Chi Minh. Anti-Communist nationalism, it seemed, would continue to remain politically ineffective.

3. The Deceit of Land Reform in South Vietnam

[During the early years—out of the hope for progressive action in Vietnam—people in the West tended to overlook Diem's shortcomings and were reluctant] to admit that the regime's approach to the problem of agrarian reform was politically disastrous. When the slightness of Diem's plans were revealed, he was not blamed for the inadequacy of his program, but rather was praised for the careful manner in which he tackled the delicate task of agrarian reform. What he proposed was widely considered as only a beginning. This at least was the hope of those Diem supporters who regarded a radical land reform as the most urgent measure in the struggle against the Vietminh, and therefore regretted that he had acted so late, set his goal so low, and worked toward it with such exasperating slowness.

The land-reform program was inadequate in several respects. It was started too late and was carried out too slowly; it did not go far enough, particularly in regard to land distribution; and its provisions for payment by the peasants who received land created an unnecessary hardship and were a serious political blunder. No measures whatever were taken during 1954. It seemed that Diem felt less urgency about the need for agrarian reform than had his predecessors during the last years of the Bao Dai regime. Only after being prodded for months by American advisers, including Ambassador Collins, did Diem take the first cautious steps early in 1955, aimed at a reduction of land rents, at safeguarding the rights of tenants through tenancy contracts, and at providing land for the resettlement of refugees from the North. As to the much more important problemm of land transfers from large owners to tenants, nothing at all was done until October, 1956. Still worse than this delay was the manner in which the government embarked on this crucial task, revealing a complete lack of understanding for the disastrous political consequences that the failure to act forcefully was bound to produce.

All figures, no matter how impressive at first sight, underline the disheartening inadequacy of the land-transfer program. The government boasted that it had made available for transfer 1.725 million acres of cultivated and abandoned land. This, however, was only 20 per cent of the total cultivated rice area. (Only rice land was subject to transfer.) Of these 20 per cent marked for distribution, less than two-thirds (1.062 million acres) had actually "changed hands," according to government statistics, by 1962—six years after the start of the program. But not all these acres that had "changed hands" had gone to the needy peasants.

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Much of the land acquired from French owners through purchase financed by the French government was sold to the highest bidder. According to Bernard Fall, the total of the land expropriated from Vietnamese owners or purchased from the French, and therefore available for distribution, was about 1 million hectares (2.47 million acres). Of this total, "only about one-fourth had reached the landless farmer" after seven years of transfer operations. The regime and its defenders in the United States pointed proudly at the figure of 109,438 peasants (mostly tenants) who, as of July, 1961, had benefited from the land transfer program, neglecting, however, to draw attention to the fact that more than 1 million tenants had received no land at all, or, as another observer puts it, "of an estimated 1 to 1.2 million tenant households existing in 1955, about 10 per cent obtained land under the government's land-transfer program."

The limited scope and the lagging execution, however, were not the only negative aspects of the land-transfer program. Politically no less disastrous were the provisions for payment by the tenants for land that had largely been in their effective possession for years. Wherever the Vietminh had been in control, the land of the large absentee owners was given to the peasants. By and large, Diem's land transfer consisted in nothing but the legalization of these conditions. The only change that Diem's land-distribution program produced for most of its so-called beneficiaries was that they now had to pay for land of which they had long considered themselves the rightful owners. And they had to pay for it in six yearly installments, which was too short a period for most. Titles were provisional. Those who received land were consequently as dissatisfied with Diem's land reform as was the majority who remained tenants. Peasant dissatisfaction with the land reform consequently became the main theme of Communist propaganda in the South.

As to land rents and security of tenancy through contracts, Diem's agrarian reform no doubt provided a measure of relief for the more than 1 million remaining tenants, most of whom, prior to the reform, had been completely at the mercy of the landlords. But the lack of impartial enforcement agencies greatly reduced the benefits that the peasants might have derived from these reforms: government officials, even if not corrupt, rarely stood up for the peasants against the landlords. To be sure, cases of rents amounting to 50 per cent of the tenant's crop became rare. Also, the tenants realized the advantages of secure tenancy through contracts for three or five years, and "three-fourths of tenant farmers entered into these contracts by the middle of 1959."[3] Furthermore, the plight of hundreds of thousands of peasants was eased by the National Agrarian Credit Office, which was created in

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April, 1957, to supply peasants in temporary need of funds with loans previously obtainable only at usurious rates. But the absence of any kind of democratic representation of the peasants meant that the rural masses continued to be victimized by landlords and government officials. The legal rent of 25 per cent of the crop was widely disregarded—tenants considered themselves lucky if their rent was no more than 30 per cent. Even after 1960, when insurrection made the struggle for peasant loyalty the overriding political issue, abusive treatment of peasants remained widespread. Landlords, returning with the army to former guerrilla-held regions, extracted rents far above the legal limit. Since this was possible only with the help or acquiescence of the Saigon-appointed local officials, the peasants more often than not regretted having been returned to government control.

The peasants also resented not getting the ownership of formerly unoccupied land, but instead being settled on it as tenants. This was true even of land which the refugees, largely through their own efforts, had opened for cultivation. "At the Cai San development in southwestern Vietnam, for example, there was so much resistance to tenancy contracts by the 43,000 resettled refugees that the government cut off daily subsistence payments in order to bring the refugees around."[4]

The narrow scope and the fragmentary execution of the agrarian reform, so fateful for the country's political evolution, reveal a great deal about Diem's political philosophy and the hollowness of his claim that his was a revolutionary regime. Diem was unable to see that Vietnam's national revolution could be completed and all remnants of colonialism wiped out only through radical economic and social reforms. For the peasant masses, exploitation under a feudal land regime had been the dominant reality of colonialism. Colonialism, therefore, would not end for them until landlordism was abolished.

Far from being eliminated by a thorough agrarian reform, the landlords, for decades the associates of the colonial regime, were in fact the group that, more than any other, succeeded in asserting its interests under Diem. A maximum of 6,300 persons (most of them absentee landlords) owned 45 per cent of all rice land in the South. The vast majority of them were not at all affected by the land-transfer program, since they owned less than the approximately 300 acres the law permitted them to retain. But even of the 2,500 who owned 40 per cent of the Southern rice land, only 1,584 had been partly expropriated by late 1962. (Land held by the Roman Catholic Church, estimated at about 370,000 acres, was not subject to transfer.)

The landlords were of course compensated, with 10 per cent of the price for expropriated land in cash and the rest in twelve-year govern-

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ment bonds at 3 per cent annual interest. They did not consider this satisfactory, and that is why they sabotaged the entire reform after they succeeded in severely limiting the scope of the transfer program. Since they were strongly entrenched in the administration, they were in a good position for this sabotage. "Lack of serious interested administrators" was given as the cause for the slow progress of the reform by American advisers. "Government officials, beginning with the Minister of Agrarian Reform, have divided loyalties, being themselves landholders." Of the Minister of Agrarian Reform it was reported that he had not "signed leases with his tenants as provided by the land reform decrees, and he is most certainly not interested in land distribution which would divest him of much of his property."[5] However, for obvious political reasons, such prominent landowners as Vice-President Nguyen Ngoc Tho and the Ambassador to the United States, Tran Van Chuong, eventually relinquished their holdings above the legally permitted maximum.

But was landlord opposition alone responsible for Diem's totally inadequate agrarian-reform decrees? Was the power of these few thousand people great enough to make Diem reject the advice of his American counselor Wolf Ladejinsky that the land-transfer program be broadened by reducing the upper limit per holding from 100 to 50 hectares? (In Japan, where the Americans had been in a better position to impose their ideas, landholdings were limited to 10 hectares.)

No doubt, in demanding that the agrarian reform be carried out with respect for private property, Diem could only have had in mind the interests of the rich landlords whose private property would be affected by a land-transfer program. The private property of the million or so tenants, being nonexistent, could not have been the subject of his concern. But it would be a great mistake to believe that Diem's regard for the interest of the landlord was the main reason for the inadequacy of his agrarian reform. Nor could it be said that landlord opposition was too strong for Diem to overcome. If Diem had been convinced that a more radical reform was necessary, respect for the property of the landlord would not have prevented him from pursuing it; and he could have mobilized the forces he needed to break landlord opposition. Moreover, he certainly possessed the moral courage required had he decided that the interests of its small upper class had to be sacrificed to save the country. Why did Diem fail to carry through what was so clearly the one social change called for if his anticolonial "revolution" was ever to be completed? Why did he neglect a task which even moderate "bourgeois" reformers in the nineteenth century recognized as a necessary condition for the development of democracy?

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Diem was a highly complex political man: His modern authoritarian ideas, his almost medieval principles of monarchism, and his professed adherence to some form of democracy, which together made up his politics, resist definition. Yet the answer to the question of why he failed as a social reformer could hardly be more simple: Measured against the needs of his country and the spirit of his time, Diem simply was too much of a conservative to discharge his historical mission.

The banality of this explanation makes it difficult to realize that here lies the key to Diem's failure. Diem was radical only as a nationalist and anti-Communist. His nationalism aimed at removing foreign rule, at re-establishing a genuine Vietnamese regime, not at changing the social structure that colonialism had created in Vietnam. Diem's concept of a "free" Vietnam was not concerned with the social aspirations of the masses, and, as it turned out, also hostile to the political aspirations of the elite. Once the French were out and the Communists kept at bay, South Vietnam was, as far as Diem was concerned, "free" by definition. His nationalism, therefore, had little social content, and his anti-Communism none at all. Had Diem understood that mass support for his regime was indispensable in his struggle against Communism, he would probably have done away with landlordism completely and turned all tenants into landowners at no cost to them at all. The political gains of such a land reform would have been worth an even higher price. But Diem, the conservative, rejected revolutionary social change as a means of reducing the attraction of Communism, and it was this which gradually led him to rely more and more on antidemocratic measures and naked force.

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1 Bernard Fall wrote: "The varying positions taken by the French Communist Party towards the war in Indo-China have provided a striking example of the difficulties and contradictions which a party encounters when it tries to conciliate its local political objectives with the over-all grand design of the Soviet Union" ("Tribulations of a Party Line: The French Communists and Indo-China," in *Foreign Affairs*, April, 1955, p. 499). Fall makes it quite clear that the French CP sought to retain Vietnam within the French Union because of "Communist hopes of being able to get control of France and her overseas possessions in one swift sweep." This was true in the early postwar years, and Jacques Duclos, "the Number 2 man of the PCF after Thorez," stated in 1947, "we are for the presence of France in the Far East, contrary to what is asserted by the newspaper *Le Monde*. We have understood only too well that our departure from the Far East would result in the arrival of certain other elements of a not-too-democratic character." Fall quotes this statement by Duclos in his article but does not make clear that these "certain other elements" were undoubtedly the United States, and that France feared being displaced by the American presence in Vietnam as much as being displaced by the

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Vietminh. Nevertheless, the French Party thereafter was to oppose the Indo-China War on the grounds that it was an "imperialist" war. The Cold War had begun, and, as Fall stated, "in less than three years the party line of the PCF had gone full circle, from all-out support of a French Union in its narrowest colonial interpretation to outright sabotage of French governmental actions aimed at maintaining the integrity of the French Union, even in the diluted version of a loose association with the Indo-China states."

2 After the November elections in 1946, the Communist party emerged with increased strength. Together with the Socialists, who had suffered a slight setback at the polls (as had the MRP), the leftist parties held no less than 46 per cent of the votes, enough to forecast a domination of the government. Under the circumstances, the Bidault government, (which had assumed power at the end of June because the MRP, Bidault's party, held the balance in the coalition with the leftist wing), was in no position to carry on until January, when the Constitution of the Fourth Republic was slated to go into effect. On November 28, the Bidault Cabinet resigned, remaining in a caretaker position until a new premier and cabinet were agred upon by all parties. The Communists immediately put up their own candidate, Maurice Thorez, but although he was supported by part of the Socialists (e.g., Léon Blum, Guy Mollet, and Felix Gouin) he was rejected by the Assembly on December 4. In the ensuing stalemate, in which the Communists refused to participate in an MRP government, Bidault's renewed bid for power was defeated, but Bidault remained at his post until December 12, when Blum was called upon to resolve the impasse between the Communists and the MRP. He formed his government on December 16. But, as Ellen Hammer puts it, Blum's government was only a "stop-gap regime appointed to serve out the few remaining days of the Provisional Government until the constitution of the Fourth Republic would go into effect" (*op. cit.*, p. 186). In January, 1947, a coalition cabinet under Paul Ramadier, also a Socialist, came into power. Interestingly enough, the Socialist Marius Moutet remained Minister for Overseas Affairs throughout these various cabinet changes, serving under the MRP as well as under the Socialists. Miss Hammer commented: "And certainly there is good reason to regard the professedly anticolonialist Socialists and Communists as seriously culpable in regard to Indochina ever since 1945" (*op. cit.*, p. 297). The Socialists, she continues, were no less opportunistic in practice than the Communists. She accuses the Socialist party of being more interested in "retaining nominal political power as a member of the governing coalition, which it did not leave until February, than in any program of principle or of action." And finally she states: "If the Socialists never found it easy to reconcile the war with their Marxist anticolonialism, they found it even less easy to translate their anticolonialism into effective practice" (*ibid.*, p. 298). If it was indeed as Jacques Raphael-Leygues, a Radical Socialist, was to state in October, 1952, namely that "since 1946 the war in Indochina has been a series of lost opportunities" (*ibid.*, p. 297), the blame for losing these opportunities can certainly be placed on the Socialists as a party and on Marius Moutet as the man most intimately in charge of Vietnamese affairs in Paris.

3 Robert Scigliano, *South Vietnam: Nation in Distress*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1963, p. 104.

4 *Scigliano, op. cit.*, p. 123.

5 John D. Montgomery, *The Politics of Foreign Aid*. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962, p. 126; from a manuscript by J. Price Gittinger, entitled "Agrarian Reform Status Report."

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Joseph Bensman & Bernard Rosenberg

ADMINISTRATIVE LIBERALISM AND THE WAR ON POVERTY

As lonely sectarian politics goes into eclipse and "coalitionism" comes to the fore, it behooves radicals to watch their step. The terrain is tricky and full of traps. One danger is a permanent by-product of the New Deal, the phenomenon C. Wright Mills once labeled "administrative liberalism." It represents the dark side of a virtuous tradition. Liberals have usually been compassionate, warm, civilized, concerned, and understanding. Convinced that most problems are remediable, they are animated by a passionate desire to do something about them. The big trouble begins when, given the chance, liberals try—and fail; too easily exasperated by the intractability of a social problem, they tend to adopt illiberal means to solve it, thereby turning themselves inside out. (To say this is by no means to claim that all liberals are finks, which is a delusion among some on the so-called New Left.)

The administrative liberal as Mills defined him was basically a social worker, committed to the ideology of welfare and planning, who assumed that he could decide the fate of his "clients" without consulting them. The ideology, variously disguised and sugar-coated, sanctioned manipulation of the masses, always in their "own best interest." To that end, experts contrived a whole battery of administrative, linguistic, rhetorical and persuasive techniques which they benevolently applied in every sphere available to them.

Administrative liberalism, with roots in the recent past, is now more widely practiced and more firmly entrenched than ever. The Kennedy-Johnson war on delinquency and poverty, however piddling and ineffectual, has meant an appreciable increase in programs designed to combat unemployment, to provide job training and improve education. In most of these areas, nearly as much is being accomplished by private, political and apolitical organizations as by government. To help deplete the modest but relatively colossal budgets which have come into being, we see a newly arisen class of field workers, re-

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searchers, officials, counselors, psychologists, and other professionals. The overwhelming majority of these people are administrative liberals, all devotedly fighting for their right to "represent" the poor (including those who argue vociferously that the poor should represent themselves). Even the rare slum dwellers who are given a measure of self-determination find that they must have advisors, consultants, specialists, and operators technically or legally competent to negotiate for and administer complex community projects.

The poor, who tend to be alienated and apathetic, do not cry for autonomy. All an outsider can do, to recruit the minimum number of "indigenous leaders" the law requires, is to participate in community action programs. The impulse to organize and represent the poor comes mainly from two types of men: left ideologues who have been to college and middle-class professionals. Once organized and represented, the poor are confronted by trained group workers or political manipulators who coach them in the arts of "indigenousness." Out of this situation emerges the showcase member of an impoverished minority group who advances a cause concocted and managed by middle-class activists.

So what? Haven't we always had something like this? Yes and no. At present a good many middle and higher echelon liberals are being forced, by the logic of their own position, into direct contact with human beings who could previously be treated as statistical categories. Poor people in the flesh sometimes resent the stereotypes that liberals foist upon them. Yet they often play the game anyhow—as totally powerless men and women do when they have nothing to lose and maybe a little to gain. But these days they often will not play the game. They stubbornly refuse to be manipulated for peanuts—and in programs that reflect only the administrative liberals' conception of adequacy. Few adolescents, let alone their elders, can get serious about work programs that pay $1.35 an hour, surely not when they are able to do as well in menial or manual work without the programs.

Why do they drop out of agencies set up to rescue them? In some cases because they object to training programs training them for jobs which require no training—or for non-existent jobs in inadequately equipped and incompetently staffed institutions where placement facilities are a joke and youth is prepared for apprenticeship in trades whose unions do not accept apprentices.

Program planners, fearful of strikes and mass drop-outs, spend time orienting their staffs and trainees on the methodology of group dynamics, to keep their operation sufficiently intact to gain further financial

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support. Despite such efforts, the administrative liberal is in crisis whenever his client turns out to be unmanageable.

There is no reason to assume any initial cynicism in the liberal who has been academically indoctrinated with, and probably motivated by, high ideals of service and selflessness. These are the ideals handed down by an older generation of upper-class social workers like Jane Addams and Lillian Wald, who did not demand any return for their sacrifices. For such ladies (Eleanor Roosevelt was another—and they had their male counterparts) doing a good job was satisfaction enough. But now the newly professionalized middle-class social worker wants also to be loved, respected, and reassured. When denied this psychological support, he feels personally offended and he strikes back.

In effect, the administrative liberal says to those he only meant to help: "How dare you do me dirt after all I have done for you?" The reaction is common and ugly in all its manifestations. The high-minded social investigator, trained perhaps to be Lady Bountiful, is tricked only so many times until she turns on the needy whose way of life in any case disgusts her. Picture the young teacher, surrounded by raucous insubordinates in her lower-class school room. How long will she cling to John Dewey and the principles of Progressive Education? How soon will she start slapping her little charges? Those ingrates! Exploitative businessmen do not ask as much of their workers who are merely expected to do a going day's work for less than the going day's pay. But the liberal in a position of power wants nothing less than subservience to his good intentions—and at less than a going day's pay.

In the clinic, an inadequate psychotherapist who fails to dispel his patient's neurosis will rarely fix the blame where it belongs—on himself. How much simpler to blame the patient for having failed him than to wonder about his own competence! Just so, the administrative liberal, repeatedly rejected by those he means to serve, loses all patience with them. *They* become the target. It is liberalism gone sour on a broader scale, but with all the old moral indignation, and more, that causes FDR to issue his "curse on both your houses" when railroad workers strike, and such injured pride is at work in HST when he seizes the coal mines. Beware of hurting the liberal, for if you do, he turns into a monster. Provoke him, that is to say, disenchant him, and he will revenge himself by advocating authoritarian and even totalitarian solutions.

No problem is as vexatious as the Negro problem, nor more likely to produce liberal exasperation. Work with Negroes, offer them

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uplift—and they go on being miserable underdogs. Well, their family structure is a mess. Who would gainsay that? It leaves a lot of fatherless Negro boys around; they are disorganized by the absence of powerful male authority figures in their environment. Daniel P. Moynihan mixes sound if platitudinous sociology with questionable folk wisdom in serving up his famous report, which pinpoints this difficulty. It follows from his analysis that the Negro family must be mended. But how? The answer is: military training which will induce masculinity in "the perpetually emasculated Negro" (a term much favored by both sexes in the social work profession).

We pass over the irony of suggesting an all-male society as the solution to latent or manifest homosexuality or the passivity that it implies. But we know of no one who would care to argue that an army is a liberal, democratic institution which teaches young men to be free, individually responsible, and independent. An army is and must be essentially totalitarian; it is the very embodiment of values at the farthest remove from anybody's liberalism. How can a liberal look to the military for *anything*?

The militarization of work through work camps, in job corps, and other programs is a further symptom of the same disease. It involves hiding a certain percentage of unemployed Negro youth in isolated camps where military or prison discipline may be said to prevail. The martial atmosphere is no doubt conducive to training—but for what? For jobs that do not exist? For jobs that do not require training? We suspect that work camps prepare youth best for jobs in work camps.

In East Harlem resides a humane and intelligent clergyman whose early career parallels that of Norman Thomas: Ivy League background, Union Theological Seminary, identification with the poor, social work in the slums. With time, there was a divergence in the evolution of these two altruists. It made all the difference. Social work in the slums is a frustrating affair; each man more or less foreswore it—Thomas for democratic socialism, his latter-day prototype for authoritarianism. Norman Eddy's saintliness, of which there is little doubt, does not preclude his use of the Marine Corps as a model for adolescents hooked on heroin. For ten or fifteen years his gentle ministrations got him nowhere with teenage addicts; today some of them strut about in uniform, study the Marine Corps Manual—and stay "clean" for awhile.

Synanon, a more ominous enterprise—originally designed to break drug addicts of their habit, since used on hapless convicts in a state penitentiary and now proclaimed by fanatic devotees as a cure-all for the ills of modern civilization—enlists many a disenchanted administra-

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tive liberal. But it was conceived by a man who talks and acts much like the late Joe McCarthy. To observe him and his organization is to feel as if the Senator had returned, and now with a program—which is all that was missing last time. Chuck Diederich, the dictatorial leader who excommunicates heretics from his movement, blames John Dewey, Progressive Education and permissive family life for all our woes. Accordingly, he espouses a superpatriarchal order, with Daddy Diederich on top of the heap. And our liberal friends can hardly contain their admiration for this apotheosis of primitive authoritarianism. We are reminded that they were once swept off their feet from the opposite side by a sanguinary brute in the Kremlin who seemed to some of them aimiably avuncular, even after he was more than half-mad with power. This serious susceptibility would appear to be chronic; frustration simply activates a bacillus in the liberal spirit that will not die. While liberals applaud Synanon, it takes a powerful social critic like Edgar Z. Friedenberg, governed by an irrepressible anarchist-libertarian bias, to recoil in horror.

At Synanon every man must be an informer (inverting the underworld code, says Diederich, as if refusal to betray a friend were exclusive to the underworld). There a failure to inform is an offense as serious for the abstainer as for the malefactor. The system depends on brainwashing. It totally subordinates the individual to a group composed of past, present and future brainwashers, all democratically organized under the beneficent auspices of a messianic master. There are pretty practices directed by the group and its cadre of professional advisers, psychologists and sociologists, including "the hair-cut" at which verbal assaults, uninhibited personal denunciation and deliberate humiliation take place. These practices are literally no different from those in Mao's China. It is all too utterly revolting. We can only agree with Friedenberg that drug addiction is preferable to the destruction of the self and the elimination of that conditional and marginal freedom left to us—no matter how many vile habits we may have.

Synanon is small potatoes—so far. But the liberal infatuation with it demonstrates a dreadful weakness in the middle which we commonly associate only with the extremes. Our partnership with liberal elements must be cemented with a substance that prevents liberal conversion hysteria from making a mockery of this whole precarious alliance.

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NOTEBOOK

David Evanier

Portrait of a Turncoat

One summer day in 1962, I was walking along Boylston Street in Cambridge toward the Charles River. Hearing my name shouted and the honking of a car horn, I turned and saw the two grinning faces of walrus-mustached Phil Luce and Clark Foreman. Clark Foreman was, and still is, director of the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee and Phil Luce had recently become his assistant. Phil and Clark were jubilant: Ohio State, Phil's alma mater, had recently banned his scheduled speech there, and an enormous ruckus was created, garnering headlines for him in the newspapers. I don't think I ever saw Phil Luce as happy as on that day, nor as friendly. Dr. Foreman had struck up a kind of fatherly friendship with him, and he seemed to be more at ease with Foreman than I'd ever seen him with anyone. The Emergency Civil Liberties Committee was, and is, an organization mainly of the old fellow-traveling Left (although Foreman himself is an independent sort). Phil Luce had a knack for creating skirmishes with the establishment that brought a new life to the organization, or so it must have seemed to Foreman in those days. On that occasion, as on all others, I was never able to take Luce seriously as a leftist. I thought him to be an adventurer, and his later metamorphoses—into a leader on the extreme Left—during student trips to Cuba, of anti-draft and Vietnam demonstrations in Times Square —and into a member of Progressive Labor, did not surprise me.

When Luce came to New York in 1961, I met him in the office of *Mainstream,* the CP-oriented cultural magazine. He was scouting around for a decent-paying job in a Left organization; then he would settle down in New York for good. While getting a decent job is a normal pursuit, the intention to find it on the Left was not the kind of idealism I met with among young people even around the CP. His first gravitation was toward the Communist party. *Mainstream* was planning to fold and be reincarnated again with a set of new faces. Phil and I were among a small group of writers approached by the young managing editor to attend several meetings with a view toward joining a new editorial board. We went to a preliminary meeting with James Allen of International Publishers; later there was an unsuccessful meeting with Gus Hall which I did not attend, and the idea was abandoned for the time being. Phil didn't care for Hall's suspicious, managerial response, nor for the

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CP world. They were distrustful of young people, and he wanted a quick recognition. But he kept fairly close to the CP world for some time, hoping to use *Mainstream* as a literary vehicle. What stays with me unforgettably about that world was party headquarters, which I visited several times on 26th Street, and the Jefferson Bookshop. Old people walked silently up and down the stairs of the small brownstone, crushed by their own loss of firm belief and by government persecution, afraid of saying something that might offend and hence cut off their checks. Where in the world would they find work if they were cast out? The young people (say, to 35) hung around the bookshop, and presented a strange array.

I do not recall conversations with Phil ever touching much upon politics at all. I remember mentioning, when Phil had started work for the E.C.L.C., that he must be charming all the old ladies and gentlemen at meetings by his mere youthfulness, by being a true "representative of the youth," as they still phrase it in those circles. He was delighted with this observation, and went on to tell about various meetings in which he had indeed charmed the golden-age clubs around the CP.

I do not think he acknowledged the irony of my observation on that occasion, or on any other; he seemed very intent on what he was doing. There was a constant sense of frustration about him. When he went into Progressive Labor and the May Second movement, I did not keep in touch with him. Progressive Labor takes at face value what its leaders learned growing up in the CP. While the CP has been consumed by self-doubt, the P.L.P. has taken over its myths and slogans and shouts them hysterically from a void out in space. I suppose Phil was peculiarly suited for P.L. Its quality of unreality and hysteria, its thinness in numbers and subsequent need for leaders, its humorlessness and extremism, its slogans like "Whip Imperialism," and its groping for the spotlight seemed appropriate for him. He moved up quickly and wound up as editor of the P.L. newspaper. He gained a good deal of publicity by his defiance of HUAC and his leadership of a demonstration against the Vietnam War in Times Square. Once, emerging from the subway, I saw him morosely coming down the stairs. I was with my girl friend; we had been to the theater and were having a good time. I pretended not to see him. I felt my evening would be disturbed by an anger that projected itself at all times—an anger expressed in rational political words but which had its roots elsewhere.

According to his recent book, *The New Left,* Luce seems to have been traumatically shaken out of his involvement in P.L. when, he claims, he was informed he was to go "underground" permanently, where he was to be trained in the techniques "of disguise, forgery, wiretapping, karate, and the evasion of surveillance." He says he was told he'd be going abroad, either to China or Cuba, "for further instruction in underground work," which he took to mean schooling in terrorism and espionage. At this time he was already under indictment and threatened with a jail term. This was quite different from preaching revolution to a clubhouse of pretty P.L.

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chicks or before a television camera. He broke with P.L. and fled to HUAC. Now he is a supporter of the Vietnam War, a cooperator with the FBI, and a booster of *National Review*. He dedicates the book to Isaac Don Levine and Herbert Romerstein. Romerstein, currently an investigator with HUAC, has been a professional expert on radical youth for fifteen years. He started his career in 1951 by writing a series of articles for the *New York Daily Mirror* entitled "I Was a Kid Communist."

During the time I knew him, Luce was always, in his way, rather gracious to me. Within the rigid confines of the totalitarian Left, he seemed to silently reach out to me as a fellow writer who didn't know all the answers. He liked the stand-up bars where we ate roast-beef sandwiches and drank beer; and it seemed to me that these places made him feel like a writer—certainly not like a political activist. In the mid-twenties, there comes a time for the somewhat sheltered person, when things become desperate, overwhelming. There seems to be no way to put the pieces together and remake your life in the way you want to. The odds are too great. The need for success, for society's approval become the determining things, and self-fulfillment, with all its confusion and abortive failures, seems an impossible task. I am sure something of this was working in Phil Luce, among other things; the results are rather frightening.

Adam Hochschild

Napalm Bombs in Redwood City

Once the rockets are up
Who cares where they come down?
"That's not my department,"
Says Werner von Braun.
(—from a song by Tom Lehrer)

Burning napalm consumes oxygen so fast that, if it lands on you squarely, you may die by suffocation rather than by roasting.

When napalm—essentially jet fuel with an additive to make it as sticky as honey—lands on your skin, you can't scrape it off. If you are relatively fortunate, and the flaming jelly covers only an arm or a leg, the limb will be partly cooked, much as if it had been held in a pot of boiling fat or over a fire.

Recently a new form of napalm has been "developed," a kind that sticks better. Our Air Force reportedly is happy with the new type, Napalm–B, and is dropping it in Vietnam, mostly in 750- and 1,000-pound bombs.

Napalm–B is mixed in several large, reddish-brown machines which stand on concrete stilts a few yards from the

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calm, gently rippling waters of San Francisco Bay. Crates of empty bombs are brought into the plant, poured full of the deadly jelly, and shipped off to Asia.

The machines look vaguely like 20-foot-high butter churns. A tall wire fence and a friendly but firm, uniformed guard prevent you from getting too close. The mixing machines and the shouting workers in colored safety helmets make the plant seem remarkably like a normal factory. If you could get beyond the wire fence, through the hard hats, and into the minds of those who make the napalm, you would not find them sadistic ogres, but just like men who mix concrete, build bridges, or run printing presses. And maybe that is the most frightening thing of all.

When the United Technology Center (UTC) contracted to make $11 million worth of napalm this year, it subleased some waterfront land in Redwood City, California, and expected no more attention from the public than it had received during the previous seven years of its life, mostly spent making rocket engines for the Air Force.

Company officials soon were surprised. People in Redwood City and at nearby Stanford University hurriedly formed the Redwood City Committee Against Napalm, with about 100 active members. A bitter controversy erupted, shaking the comfortable suburb of 56,000 into political turmoil and national publicity. In the spotlight was Redwood City's Port Commission, which had to approve the sublease of land for the plant before UTC could begin making napalm.

The Chamber of Commerce took a stand favoring the Port Commission's approval of the sublease, while several local ministers joined the Committee which opposed it. Editorials in the local newspaper wobbled indecisively in between.

The controversy reached its climax at the Port Commission's packed and stormy meeting, on March 21, which was called to consider Resolution P–496, the sublease of land for the napalm plant.

During the meeting, the Commission's Chairman, Norman Menifee, unwittingly raised the critical question. When a Stanford student was telling the Port Commission that it had a "moral responsibility" not to permit napalm to be made in Redwood City, Menifee interrupted him, turned to the city attorney and asked, "What *are* my responsibilities?"

City attorney Richard Gardella answered by reading a list of Port Commissioner's duties from the city charter. The resolution was passed, because none of the duties had anything to do with the morality of making instruments of war, and the meeting broke up in an angry uproar. But that pivotal question, "What are my responsibilties?" still lingers, and the varying answers it prompted gave rise to a moral drama of far greater significance than the passage of Resolution P–496.

Those who protested against the manufacture of napalm felt that it was the responsibility of the Port Commission to prevent it. They felt that napalm, besides being used in a war which most of them strongly opposed, was so brutal a weapon that manufacturing it was wrong on this ground alone. "Let me offer an analogy," wrote Unitarian minister William H. Houff to his parishioners. "If we must have capital punishment, then there is a

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moral distinction between the electric chair and burning at the stake." Furthermore, Houff pointed out, napalm bombing is fundamentally imprecise, and, however well-aimed, often kills or painfully wounds civilians.

Arguing for the plant, other local citizens took the position that, as long as one supports the war, one has the duty to make almost any weapon needed to win it.

But a startlingly large number of people took a third and entirely different position on the issue: that, regarding the morality of producing napalm, Redwood City had no responsibility at all.

Port Commission Chairman Menifee was quoted saying at the March 21 meeting: "It is not the function of this Board to be concerned with morality. If napalm can be produced with safety, and it is good business, then it is our duty to approve the sublease."

City Attorney Gardella backed up this bizarre statement. The Commission minutes paraphrased him: "The [Commission] cannot discriminate against lessees unless the operation of their businesses is proved to be against public safety and welfare." (And naturally, the "public safety and welfare" of Vietnamese peasants or guerrillas is not involved.)

Asked later how he felt about the use of napalm and the war in Vietnam, Gardella said, "The Port Commission has made no expression of opinion. They are neither for nor against napalm as a production item." (He did not express how they felt about napalm as a consumption item.)

This "neutrality" means, of course, approval of the plant. One wonders how far the Port Commission would go in its "hands off" attitude. What if someone wanted to build a plant on port land for the sole purpose of printing pornography? Or anti-religious literature? Or Communist propaganda? Would the same statements be heard?

After the Port Commission's action, the Redwood City Committee Against Napalm got more than 3,000 signatures on a petition to force a city referendum on the issue. During the weeks the signatures were gathered, letters flooded the local newspaper offices. It was one of those rare occasions when the chance to do something directly about a war 6,000 miles away seemed within the grasp of one small community.

Gathering signatures for the petition revealed a somber fact: upper middle-class professionals in the city's plush "hill" districts signed it somewhat more readily than citizens of the small Negro area, who voiced fears about losing job opportunities if the plant moved elsewhere. (In fact, the plant employed only a small number of people, mostly UTC regulars from out-of-town.) One wonders if much of a community battle on the issue would have taken place, if UTC had decided to build its napalm plant, say, in an unemployment-ridden section of Appalachia.

But the referendum was never held. The petition was invalidated on a legal technicality hotly disputed in several court fights. The napalm continues to be mixed, and the newly-filled bombs leave the plant daily.

UTC's contract for 100 million pounds of napalm will be fulfilled by December. Whether the Air Force will need more is not certain, though at the rate of escalation in Vietnam, things look good for the napalm business.

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Richard Flacks

ON THE USES OF PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

The slogan of "participatory democracy" has become a central point in the writing of the New Left. Below, a former leader of Students for a Democratic Society, and now a member of the faculty at the University of Chicago, offers an exposition of what, in his view, the term means. In our next issue Paul Goodman and Tom Kahn will continue the discussion with critical observations concerning Mr. Flacks's article, and he of course will be given the opportunity to reply.—ED.

1. The most frequently heard phrase used for defining participatory democracy is that "men must share in the decisions which affect their lives." In other words, participatory democrats take very seriously a vision of man as citizen; and by taking seriously such a vision, they seek to extend the conception of citizenship beyond the conventional political sphere to all institutions. Other ways of stating the core values are to assert the following: each man has responsibility for the action of the institutions in which he is imbedded; all authority ought to be responsible to those "under" it; each man can and should be a center of power and initiative in society.

2. The first priority for the achievement of a democracy of participation is to win full political rights and representation for all sectors of the population. Democracy, in fact, is an issue for this generation of radicals largely because their political experience has been shaped by the Negroes' elemental struggle for a political voice in the U.S. This struggle has not been simply for the right to vote—though even this right has not yet been guaranteed—but, more broadly, it has been an effort to win a share of political power by poor Negroes. It has been the experience of Negroes in the North, where voting rights have been formally guaranteed, that Negroes as a group have remained systematically under-represented in the political process and that, where Negro representation exists, it operates in behalf of Negro middle-class interests

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and is highly dependent on the beneficence of white-dominated political machines. The results of this situation are plain to see in every Northern city. Thus the main thrust of radicals in the civil rights movement has to do less with breaking the barriers of legal segregation and formal exclusion than with attempting to build viable grass-roots organizations of poor Negroes, which would actually represent the needs of the poor and remain independent of white and middle-class domination. The ideology of "participatory democracy" has been useful in this effort, since it provides a rationale for avoiding premature "coalition" of grass-roots groups with more powerful white or middle-class organizations, for effectively criticizing "charismatic" styles of leadership which prevent rank-and-file people from learning political skills, for criticizing tendencies toward bureaucratism, demagoguery, and elitism which are predictable in mass movements. Moreover, "participatory democracy," unlike black nationalist ideology, which also helps to mobilize grass-roots Negroes, offers a possible bridge between Negroes and other groups of poor or voiceless people. Thus we find much of the same rhetoric and organizing technique being used by SNCC workers in Southern Negro communities, SDS organizers among poor whites in Chicago and Cleveland, and farm labor organizers among the multi-national grape workers in California.

Just how is participatory democracy being applied to the organization of economically disadvantaged groups? It has influenced the analysis of the problem of poverty in an affluent society, by stressing political voicelessness and lack of organization as a root cause of deprivation. This analysis leads to an emphasis on grass-roots organization and mobilization of the poor as the main way of ending poverty. Since the people involved lack political skill, organization requires a full-time staff, initially composed of students and ex-students, but soon involving "indigenous" leadership This staff has the problem of allaying the fear, suspicion, and sense of inadequacy of the community—hence there has been a strong emphasis on building a sense of community between staff and rank-and-file, and of finding techniques which will facilitate self-expression, enable new leadership to emerge, enable people to gain dignity by participation, and the organization to become self-sustaining. Such techniques include: rotation of leadership, eschewing by staff of opportunities to "speak for" the organization, the use of "consensus" to foster expression by the less-articulate.

More important than such procedural techniques has been the attempt to generate institutions which help to bind people to the organization, to see immediate benefits from participation. Thus, in Missis-

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sippi, alongside the political organization (the Freedom Democratic party), a variety of related "projects" have grown up—community centers, freedom schools, a Poor People's Corporation to help finance small business enterprise, cooperatives, and the like. In Newark, the Newark Community Union has established its own radio station. In California, the Farm Worker Association established a credit union. In Cleveland, the SDS Community Project established a traveling street theater. Although these new institutions are sometimes viewed as alternatives to participation in "organized society" (*vide* Staughton Lynd in DISSENT—Summer, 1965), in practice, they are a very important way of sustaining a developing organization. They enable people to participate in an organization in a continuing fashion, help develop organizational resources, train people for leadership, and give people a sense of the possibilities for social change. But they are in no sense a *substitute* for political activity, direct action, and the development of a program. These, and not the development of "parallel institutions," constitute the main functions of the local political parties, community unions, etc., which are developing in many urban slum and rural areas.

The emphasis on participatory democracy has helped these developing grass-roots organizations formulate and articulate *issues and programs*. Although the constituencies of these organizations include the most impoverished sectors of society, it is remarkable that—particularly in the Northern cities—the main activity of these organizations has not been focused on economic issues. They have, rather, been struggling over issues of *control, self-determination* and *independence*: Shall the poor have a voice in the allocation of War on Poverty funds? Shall urban renewal be shaped by the people whose neighborhood is being renewed? Shall the police be held accountable by the community? Who is to decide the dispensation of welfare payments? Who makes the rules in the welfare bureaucracies? Who controls the ghetto?

The outcome of these grass-roots organizing efforts, of course, cannot be predicted. The civil rights movement, in its direct-action phase, began the process of bringing Negroes and the poor into the political arena—and the results, in terms of political alignments and issues, have already been substantial. The more recent efforts of political organization initiated by the participatory democrats will certainly increase the degree of Negro representation in the political process. These efforts are now being emulated by more established and less insurgent agencies—Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference, for example, in the massive organizing campaign in Chicago, used many of the techniques and rhetorical devices developed by SNCC and SDS.

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It seems clear, then, that the poor are being organized and mobilized. But such mobilization can lead in two directions. On the one hand, there is the strong probability that the newly developed constituencies will take their place alongside other ethnic and interest groups, bargaining for benefits within the framework of the Democratic party. An alternative to this path is embodied in the vision of participatory democracy—the development of community-based, self-determining organizations, having the following functions:

> Achieving community control over previously centralized functions, through local election of school and police administrators; by forming community-run cooperatives in housing, social services, retail distribution and the like; by establishing community-run foundations and corporations.
>
> Maintaining close control over elected representatives; running and electing poor people to public office; ensuring direct participation of the community in framing political platforms and in shaping the behavior of representatives.
>
> Acting like a trade union in protecting the poor against exploitative and callous practices of public and private bureaucracies, landlords, businessmen, etc.

3. The values underlying participatory democracy have, so far, achieved their fullest expression in efforts to organize and mobilize communities of disenfranchised people, but such democratizing trends and potentialities also exist in other sectors of society. The most obvious example is the nationwide effort by university students to change the authority structure in American higher education. For the most part, this activity has been directed at protest against arbitrary restrictions of student political expression, and against paternalistic regulations limiting students' rights to privacy and self-expression. The most dramatic and widely-known instance of this activity was that of the civil disobedience and student strikes at Berkeley in the fall of 1964. But the Berkeley situation has been repeated in less intense form on scores of campuses across the country. Student reform efforts have increasingly shifted from protest and direct action to demands for a continuing voice in the shaping of university policy. Some students now have demanded representation on administrative committees. Others have looked to the formation of organizations along the trade union model—organizations which would be independent of and could bargain with university administrators, rather than becoming participants in administration. Thus far, the impact of the student protest has been to generate a considerable degree of ferment, of re-examination and experimentation among college faculties and administrators, as well as efforts coercively to repress the protest.

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Student protest has spread from the elite, liberal campuses to Catholic schools, and from there to other clerical bodies. The talk at Catholic seminaries now prominently includes "participatory democracy," and "New Left" clergymen have gone so far as to propose the establishment of a trade union for priests. But the University and the Church are not the only institutions witnessing challenges to existing authority structures. In recent years, there has been an enormous growth of unionization among schoolteachers and other white-collar workers, particularly among employees in the welfare bureaucracies. Now one can also observe ferment within the professions: young doctors and young lawyers are developing organizations dedicated to challenging the authority of the highly conservative professional societies, and to bringing an active sense of social responsibility to their professions.

It is not farfetched to predict that the idea of "Workers' control" will soon become a highly relevant issue in American life. American industrial unions have largely had to sacrifice the struggle for control in the work place for higher wages and fringe benefits; but at union conventions, control over working conditions is repeatedly urged as a high-priority bargaining demand. The impetus for making such a demand paramount, however, may first come from the ranks of white-collar and professional employees. The authority structure of the modern bureaucratic organization is plainly unsuited for a work force which is highly educated and fully aware of its competence to participate in decision-making. The first impulse of modern managers faced with threats to authority has been to make small concessions ("improve channels of communications"). But the exciting time will come when such insurgency turns from protest over small grievances to a full-fledged realization of the possibilities for first-class citizenship within public bureaucracies and private corporations. The forms of such democratization could include further unionization of the unorganized, worker representation in management, young-turk overthrows of entrenched leaderships in the professions, and, ultimately, demands for elections and recall of managers and administrators, and for employee participation in the shaping of policies and regulations.

4. The most authoritarian sector of public decision-making in the U.S. is in the area of foreign policy. The American Constitution gives enormous power to the President to make foreign policy without substantial built-in checks from Congress. The scope of Presidential power has, of course, been greatly expanded by the technology of modern war; the unchecked power of the government to mobilize support for its policies has been greatly enhanced by the invention of conscription, by

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the mass media and their centralization, by covert intelligence operations, etc. It is not surprising that foreign policy has been the special province of elites in America and, since World War II, has been carried on within a framework of almost total popular acquiescence.

The simultaneous occurrence of the Vietnam War and the emergence of a New Left in America may generate change in this situation. Due largely to student initiative, we are witnessing more protest during time of war than in any other comparable period in U.S. history. Not only does this protest begin to shatter the foreign policy consensus, but it also shows signs of bringing about more permanent change in the structure of foreign policy decision-making.

First, the teach-ins and similar initiatives mark the emergence of an *independent public* in the foreign policy area—a body of people, satisfied neither with official policy nor with official justifications of policy, determined to formulate alternatives, stimulate debate and criticism, and obtain independent sources of information. This public is to be found largely in universities but now spills over to include much of the intellectual community in the country. Moreover the teach-in as a technique for disseminating information suggests, at least symbolically, a significant breakthrough in the effort to find alternatives to the propaganda media controlled or manipulated by the state.

Second, the emerging foreign policy public has plainly had an at least transitory impact on Congress. The revival of Congressional independence with respect to foreign policy would be a signal advance of democracy in America.

Third, the attempts to find a non-religious moral ground for conscientious objection in time of war has led to a rediscovery of the Allied case at the Nuremberg Trials — a case which argued in essence that individuals were responsible for the actions of institutions taken in their name. This principle, taken seriously, is revolutionary in its implications for individual–state relations; and it converges, interestingly enough, with "participatory democracy." The Nuremberg principle is now being used as a basis for legal defense of draft-refusal and civil disobedience at draft boards; it inspires professors to refuse to grade their students and become thereby accomplices to Selective Service; it inspires intellectuals and artists to acts of public defiance and witness. In fact, it is possible that one positive outcome of the war in Vietnam will have been its impact on the moral sensibility of many members of the intellectual and religious communities—forcing them to rethink their relationship to the state and to the institutions of war.

It is possible, then, that an unforeseen by-product of the highly-

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developed society is the emergence of potential publics that are (a) competent to evaluate the propaganda of elites and (b) impatient with chauvinistic definitions of loyalty. The organization of such publics in the U.S. may be a significant outcome of the war in Vietnam. These publics do not have the power to change the course of this war, but the spread of their influence may be a factor in transforming the issues and alignments of American politics in the coming period. Moreover, the strength of these publics on the campus is now being reflected in the growing conflict over the role of the universities in national mobilization. The current campaign to prevent university participation in the Selective Service induction process may portend a more profound effort to make universities centers of resistance to encroaching militarization. The outcome of this particular struggle could be important in democratizing the structure of foreign policy decision-making.

5. The development of democratic consciousness in communities, organizations, and foreign policy decision-making will mean little if the national distribution of power remains undisturbed. This means that the social theory of the New Left must be centrally concerned with the development of relevant models for democratic control over public decisions at the national level.

It is clear that implicit in the New Left's vision is the notion that participatory democracy is not possible without some version of public control over the allocation of resources, economic planning, and the operation of large corporations. Such control is, of course, not missing in the United States. The federal government has taken responsibility for national planning to avoid slump, to control wages and prices, and to avoid inflation. Moreover, the postwar period has seen a tremendous increase in public subsidy of the corporate economy—through the defense budget, urban redevelopment, investment in research and education, transportation and communication, etc. In many ways the "two governments"—political and corporate—are merged, and this merger approximates an elitist corporatist model (hence breaking down even the modest pluralism which once characterized the system). The further development of this trend will foreclose any possibility for the achievement of democratic participation.

The demand for more national planning, once the major plank of American socialism, is now decidedly on the agenda of American political and corporate elites. The question for the Left has become how to *democratize* that planning. There are as yet no answers to this, or to the question of how to bring the large corporations under democratic control.

6. Thus the main intellectual problem for the new radicals is to

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suggest how patterns of decentralized decision-making in city administrations, and democratized authority structures in bureaucracies, can be meshed with a situation of greatly broadened national planning and coordination in the economy.

That no such programs and models now exist is, of course, a consequence of the disintegration of the socialist tradition in America and of the continuing fragmentation of American intellectual life. Unless the Newt Left consciously accepts the task of restoring that tradition and of establishing a new political community, the democratizing revolts which it now catalyzes are likely to be abortive.

7. These tasks were, less than a generation ago, declared by many American intellectuals to be no longer relevant. Ideology, it was argued, had no place in highly developed societies where problems of resource allocation had become technical matters. But the reverse may be true: that ideological questions—that is, questions about the structure and distribution of power—are *especially* pertinent when societies have the capacity to solve the merely technical problems.

It seems clear that the issue in a highly developed society is not simply economic exploitation; it is the question of the relationship of the individual to institutional and state authority which assumes paramount importance. In America, today, the familiar mechanisms of social control—money, status, patriotic and religious symbols—are losing their force for a population (particularly the new generation) which has learned to be intensely self-conscious and simultaneously worldly; to expect love and self-fulfillment; to quest for freedom and autonomy. All this learning is a consequence of increasingly sophisticated educational opportunities, of increasingly liberated standards in family and interpersonal relations, of affluence itself. Against this learning, the classic patterns of elite rule, bureaucratic authority, managerial manipulation, and class domination will have a difficult time sustaining themselves.

The virtue of "participatory democracy," as a basis for a new politics, is that it enables these new sources of social tension to achieve political expression. Participatory democracy symbolizes the restoration of personal freedom and interpersonal community as central political and social issues. It is not the end of ideology; it is a new beginning.

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With the memoir below we commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution which took place on October 23, 1956.—ED.

Béla K. Király

FROM DEATH TO REVOLUTION

A Memoir of the Hungarian Revolution*

On a murky January day in 1952, after five months of "investigations" by the Military section of the State Security Agency of Hungary, I was brought before a three-member court-martial convoked by the Supreme Military Court of Budapest. No witnesses for the defense were heard. The counsel assigned to my defense first saw me when I entered the courtroom, was not allowed to see the documents of the proceedings, and was not permitted to talk to me. He had to make his five-minute plea on the basis of what he had heard in court.

I "confessed," of course. After two hours, the jury withdrew to deliberate. Thirty minutes later, the four sentences—for there were four charges—were drawn up. The jury filed back in and the chairman read:

> In the name of the Hungarian people.... This court finds Major General Béla K. Király guilty of espionage for the United States imperialists; of sabotaging the training of officers of the Army; of organizing subversive groups aiming to overthrow the government of Hungary; and of conspiracy against the people's democracy.... This court condemns the accused on all four counts to a sentence of death by hanging, and as secondary sentences to be stripped of his rank, be cashiered from the People's Army, and stripped of all his political rights for ten years....

For four years after that dark day I lived on death row. In August, 1955, I was suddenly taken to a civil court in Budapest. My wife had filed suit for divorce. There I met her for the first time since my arrest. For four years we had neither seen one another nor been allowed to correspond. After questioning my wife, the judge turned to me:

"What is your sentence?"—"Death," I replied.

"When was this sentence passed?"—"Four years ago."

"It can't be true. Telling lies puts you in contempt of court...."

*Excerpts from *Anti-Militarist in Arms*, a book in progress.

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An hour later the judge informed the court that, according to law, a divorce was impossible if one of the parties was condemned to death. The court was to consult with the proper authorities and would reconvene September 5 for a new hearing. On September 5, when I was returned to the courtroom, the same judge presided. Before beginning the hearing, he smiled and told me: "Congratulations. You are no longer under sentence of death; it has been commuted to life."

The divorce was granted, and I was taken back to jail. I now received normal treatment accorded to men not under sentence of death.

The crucial year 1956 dawned. As the days passed, news of unrest, demonstrations, meetings, demands, criticism of the Party leadership penetrated even the prison walls. Something was in the air—this we clearly knew. Those under lesser sentences began to receive mail and visitors. Communists, Social Democrats, and a few other political offenders were released on parole. (Outside, they joined groups pressuring the regime for liberal and humane reforms). But during the hot summer of 1956 most political prisoners were still in jail.

News of the exoneration and rehabilitation of the late Communist leader László Rajk and his closest associates, who had been executed by the Stalinists in 1949, reached us soon after the official announcement on March 29. So did the tidings of the June mass meeting of the Petőfi Circle (the organization of young Hungarian intellectuals and students), where members of the Circle had openly condemned the Party leadership before several of Hungary's top Stalinists. They demanded radical reforms, including rehabilitation not only of the dead but also the release of the living.

This meeting more than any other single event helped to bring about the fall of Mátyás Rákosi, the Stalinist czar of Hungary, on July 18, 1956. His welcome departure could have launched Hungary on the same peaceful road toward development of a national Communism as that of Poland. If only the Party leadership and the government had been transferred into the hands of Imre Nagy and his followers on July 18, he could have introduced the reforms that he had proposed in his "dissertations," as he called the memoranda to the Hungarian CP over the previous few months. This would have meant gradual change without bloodshed, without the use of force, and without humiliating the U.S.S.R. The majority of Hungarians would have gone along with this program, for Imre Nagy's plans corresponded with the desires of the majority of Hungarians in the summer of 1956.

But the stubborn, shortsighted, selfish Hungarian Stalinists decided

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otherwise. They continued to bar Imre Nagy from the Party, even as the Polish CP was ushering Władysław Gomułka smoothly back into its ranks. Instead, Hungary's Stalinists invested Ernő Gerő, another Stalinist, with supreme power. The Hungarian people looked upon Gerő as another Muscovite, another proconsul of the Kremlin, just like Rákosi—as indeed he was. Not that Gerő was a man who lacked ideals or loyalty; he was not an opportunist. Thus the idea of international Communism and his devotion to the Comintern and to the Soviet Union possessed this hard-working, intelligent man, body and soul. But his investiture as supreme leader of Hungary was an anomaly, even an absurdity. He was pledged to serve alien ideas and interests often opposed to those of the Hungarians. His appointment doomed the hopes of the peaceful reformers, the Nagy group, and may be considered the beginning of the road to revolution.

The Gerő leadership intended to conserve the Stalinist structure intact and to follow the policies of the fallen Rákosi. Yet, as tension was growing in Hungary, they had to make concessions somewhere. Fortunately for us political prisoners, they decided to make these by amnestying political offenders.

Exodus to "Freedom"

The Gerő leadership hastened to rehabilitate many political prisoners and to release those who were still alive. In the *Gyüjtőfogház* (Maximum Security Prison) at Kőbánya, where I had spent the last five years, were several thousand political prisoners. Haphazardly, without any apparent system or logic, prisoners would suddenly be freed. Some of these had been serving life sentences, others just a few years; some were former Fascists, others Democrats. Every day hundreds of prisoners up for release were brought before a group of state attorneys who were holding hearings in the prison office block. The attorneys always asked the same routine question: "Did you, or did you not commit the crime for which you were sentenced?" And the equally routine answer usually was a resounding, and true, "no." This question was indeed revolutionary. In the Stalinist era, one "confessed," just as I had done, to the most unheard-of crimes. There is no need here to explain why. The most horrible part of this charade was the need to feign guilt at all times, even with fellow prisoners.

But now the country was being shaken; the prison walls were cracking around us, and each day we saw friends leaving jail.

The hearings were over by early August, 1956, and of the several thousand men in our prison, only 12 had not been brought before the state attorneys; I was among them. These 12 could scarcely have been

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more disparate; they included long- and short-term prisoners, Fascists and Democrats. I had never completely lost hope and the will to survive. But now I despaired.

Later that month all 12 names were called. Not even at my trial had I felt such suspense as at that moment. Before my trial I had held a senior command position in the People's Army; it would have been undignified, by Stalinist standards, to have paid then with less than capital punishment. But now we were each to be brought before an obscure state attorney—our names were in the lottery.

All 12 of us were lined up and led to the prison office bloc. I was brought into a small room, before a state attorney who politely offered me a seat.

"I am extremely glad to see you today," he told me. "I saw you last at the great maneuvers you organized at Verpelét, when you were commander in chief of the infantry. Do you remember the thunderstorm that broke loose while you and your staff were standing on a hill, and you all ran for the buses parked there? I was a second lieutenant, in charge of a platoon of men that were there too. You had us all get on the buses, to get out of the rain.... In 1954 as an investigator with the Secret Police, I had occasion to see your file; I read that you had been condemned to death and that the sentence was carried out. I also spoke to a man who claimed to have witnessed your execution. When I received orders to hear your case, I was shocked. Who would be coming before me under the name of Béla Király? But it is you! You look thinner, but I recognize you. I am so very glad!"

A few weeks after the hearings—on September 5—my name was shouted down the prison corridor: I was to be released the next day. But first, I had to go through release procedures. And clothes had to be found for me. I had been arrested wearing a general's uniform which, obviously, I could no longer wear. As I am six foot two inches tall, the guards could not find clothes to fit me. But my height turned out to be a blessing: the prison authorities sent to an outsize-store for something to dress me in, and I crossed the last checkpoint into freedom looking quite elegant, despite the large military boots that peeped out below my civilian trousers.

It was a dazzling autumn afternoon. I had to shield my eyes from the glare of the sun, not used to such bright light. Opposite the prison gate is the huge entrance to the largest cemetery in Budapest; the sight of people in mourning going in and out gave me pause in my first moment of "freedom" to think of the transience of human life.

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Life and action began for me soon after I left jail. A friend paid me an unexpected call and asked whether I wanted to meet certain people, all friends of Imre Nagy. My answer was an immediate and definite "yes."

The very next day I met four persons, two of them old acquaintances. They assured me that our meeting had been endorsed by Imre Nagy and that there was nothing conspiratorial about it, nothing I could not talk about openly if I wished. They offered me reading material to help me catch up on all that I had missed during my five years' confinement, and immediate information on anything that I wanted to know right then and there. They told me to ask them for any political data whenever I might need it. Then one of them said to me:

"Perhaps you do not know it yet, but several former political prisoners have already been rehabilitated. Some of them have even been reinstalled in their previous positions with the state and the Party. Several of them support Imre Nagy's plans for reforms and are doing their best to get him back into the government and Party leadership, so that his reforms can go through. Our aim is to get as many decent people who believe in Nagy's mission into state and Party positions as possible in order to speed up the start of the reforms.

"Only two institutions have refused to accept rehabilitated former political prisoners back into their old positions: the Army and the Secret Police. We don't want anything to do with the detestable Secret Police, of course, but we do want to break the uniformly Stalinist top ranks of the Army. We have Imre Nagy's backing for an effort to have you reinstated as commander in chief of the infantry if you are agreeable. If and when you are reinstated, you would be in a position to help more anti-Stalinist officers to join the Army. We are already in a position to bring pressure to bear on the Stalinist leadership. The Petőfi Circle will take up your case, if you wish, and press for your complete and immediate rehabilitation. We have connections to get articles proposing your reinstatement into the newspapers, and we can even get the issue brought up at Party meetings. This is how much influence we have these days.

"How do you feel about it? Do you want more time to get back into the swim of things? Should we meet again later?"

"No, I don't need any more time to get my bearings," I replied. "My answer is ready. I have every confidence in Imre Nagy's policy and am quite ready to accept this proposal. But I do have one condition: I shall never again join the Party."

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"Well, then there is no problem; Party membership is not a prerequisite."

"Then I am completely at Imre Nagy's disposal. Only my health is not yet up to scratch, I must first go for a complete check-up."

"Of course. Do it at once. After all, things don't move that fast. It'll take a month or two before we can complete plans for co-ordinated action in your behalf."

I went into a hospital. There were a lot of things to be healed and cured after five years of subhuman living. I got myself physically into shape, to carry out any orders Imre Nagy might give me if and when he would become prime minister.

Before my friends could put their plans on my behalf into effect, the revolution broke out. Friends of Imre Nagy in Budapest put my name forward at a clandestine meeting of Freedom Fighters who were seeking a commander in chief. It was the greatest privilege of my life that their motion was carried and I was elected by the accredited delegates of the Freedom-Fighter units, workers' councils, and revolutionary committees to be both Chairman of the Revolutionary Committee for National Defense and Commander in Chief of the National Guard (the Freedom-Fighter Forces) of Hungary. Imre Nagy endorsed the choice; he issued a government decree annulling my sentence which the Stalinist court-martial had pronounced, he reinstated me in my former rank of major general and appointed me Military Commandant of Budapest. Thus I wore several hats during the revolution and tried in all loyalty to Imre Nagy to fulfill the duties of the commands bestowed upon me.

Ambassador Andropov Tests our Nerves and our Readiness

There were several telephones on my desk in the Headquarters of the National Guard of Hungary. One of them connected my desk directly with the Prime Minister's. There were no switchboards in between. If that telephone rang, it was Imre Nagy at the other end. It did not ring often. When it did, there was something important to talk about.

About ten o'clock one morning it rang. It was November 2, an ominous day of news about the movement of Soviet troops toward the capital. From the town of Záhony, where the most important rail link with the Soviet Union crosses into Hungary, we had received reports that Soviet forces, with a preponderance of heavy armor, were pouring over the Hungarian countryside. When the Prime Minister called that morning, nobody in the room anticipated good news.

"This is Imre Nagy. Is this Király Bajtárs [Comrade in arms]?"

"Yes, Prime Minister Bajtárs, Király here."

"I have received a *note verbale* from Mr. Andropov, the Soviet

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Ambassador. It complains that armed bands are keeping the Soviet Embassy under siege and have already invaded the building. He informs me that if the Hungarian government is not in a position to protect foreign embassies and if the peaceful diplomatic labor of the Soviet Embassy cannot be safeguarded by the Hungarian government, then the Soviet Embassy will appeal to the Soviet Supreme Commander in Hungary for protection of the Embassy. That is Ambassador Andropov's message. I hope you realize what it means. It is a threat of immediate armed intervention." Imre Nagy's voice was tense.

"Yes, I understand. I'll make immediate arrangements; I guarantee that no one with malicious intent will be able to get near the Soviet Embassy," I said.

"Very well, but I should like you to go down there yourself and make arrangements on the spot."

"All right. I'll go there and direct the operation," I told him. I used the word "operation" because that was what I thought it would be. The idea of a flat lie at a moment of such high drama just did not occur to me. I expected the need for a military operation which I myself would command to clear the block where the Soviet Embassy was, either peacefully or, if that were not possible, by force. A second Soviet attack, particularly on the pretext that Soviet troops had come to preserve law and order and the immunity of diplomatic personnel, would cast a shadow over our unclouded revolution. If there were people with arms around the Soviet Embassy, ready to attack Soviet diplomatic personnel, they could not be Freedom Fighters. They would be incited by enemies of the Hungarian people and of the revolution; they must not prevail. These were my thoughts as I picked up the telephone to call out the necessary troops.

I ordered a company of Freedom Fighters from my headquarters battalion to board transport at once. I then alerted a tank company and a mechanized battalion at Dózsa barracks on Hungaria Avenue, about a mile from the Soviet Embassy. I ordered these troops to stand by immediately to await my orders.

I drove fast through the city followed by the company of Freedom Fighters. The heavy traffic of peacetime Budapest was still absent from the streets, so that we reached the barracks just about as the tanks and mechanized infantry were ready to move. The Divisional Commander, Colonel Károly Csémy, the present Kádárist Army Chief of Staff, reported that the units were ready to leave. I ordered him to lead his force immediately to the Hősök Tere [Heroes' Square], just two blocks from the Soviet Embassy, and to wait there for further orders. I added to my

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escort of Freedom Fighters two tanks and a squad of mechanized infantry and sped ahead to find out for myself the whereabouts and strength of the "enemy." I intended to tell them to disperse at once, and if they refused, I was going to call in my force and smash them. The Soviet Embassy, just like all other diplomatic missions and the Hungarians themselves, had to be protected by the legal Hungarian armed forces, not by the Red Army.

Accompanied by my smaller group, I drove through the Hősök Tere, where the larger column was due to arrive shortly, and turned into the most beautiful avenue in Budapest, a tree-lined street whose name has often been changed. It once was called Andrássy, after a former Hungarian Prime Minister and Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister; then it became Stalin Avenue; now it was called the Avenue of the Republic. From there I turned into Bajza utca, and to my relief and astonishment saw not a soul. In fact, no one cared about the Soviet Embassy. The Hungarian people were too mature to think of attacking or invading it. The so-called "siege" seemed a pure figment of Mr. Andropov's imagination.

"Well, if there's no one on the street, let's see who's inside the Embassy," I thought. With an interpreter and an aide I went up to the Embassy door. I left my escort well out of sight to avoid causing a stir. I also sent an officer back to Colonel Csémy to tell him to return to barracks with his troops as inconspicuously as possible to avoid unleashing false rumors. In time of revolution there is no worse enemy than rumor and I was determined to prevent it at all costs.

I rang the Embassy doorbell. After waiting several minutes without answer, I rang again. A small peephole opened in the center of the door and a man asked who we were. He spoke Hungarian with a thick accent. "I am Béla Király, Commandant of Budapest," I replied. "I am here on the instructions of the Prime Minister to protect the Soviet Embassy. I should like to talk with Ambassador Andropov."

The peephole closed silently. Within a few minutes the man returned and asked me, through the peephole, to come in, with one escort. The interpreter and I entered the Embassy. We were ushered into a large hall where we were received by Mr. Andropov in the presence of five or six other persons, presumably embassy staff and secret police. I explained my mission and my gratification that the Embassy was not under "siege." I assured the Ambassador that no one would be permitted to do any such thing. If he felt he needed added protection, I told him I could strengthen the usual security arrangements in that district—which I had, in fact, already done.

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The Ambassador smiled hypocritically. I say hypocritically because he already knew that within 48 hours the Soviet Union was to launch a massive attack against Hungary. (But perhaps even he did not know?)

The Ambassador said:

"There must have been some misunderstanding on the part of the Prime Minister. I did indeed tell him that some old women came into the building, looking for new living quarters because their homes were destroyed in the recent unfortunate events. But they told me that these rooms were too big to keep warm and went away."

I knew that Andropov was lying; yet I, too, had to be a diplomat and I smiled at him with little conviction. With exaggerated politeness, the Ambassador suggested that we go upstairs to his study and showed me the way, gently touching my arm. He murmured in my ear: "You know that the Soviet people are your best friends. We regret deeply what has happened. We congratulate you on your success and shall help you to rebuild your land. But at the moment something much more important has to be done. Perhaps you are aware of the exchange of notes between our two countries? In one of his latest notes Prime Minister Nagy suggests summoning a joint Hungarian-Soviet military commission to discuss and arrange the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary. About an hour ago I sent an answer to Mr. Nagy informing him that my government has accepted his suggestion and that our delegation is prepared to attend such meetings this afternoon. Would you be kind enough to telephone the Prime Minister and ask him for his reply?" And he watched me, curious to see the impact of this information.

"It will give me great pleasure to phone the Prime Minister. I hope that this marks the beginning of a new era in which, as the Prime Minister has said, we may be able to live in genuine friendship with the Soviet people," I said.

"This is the phone," Andropov said, pointing to one of a number of telephones on his desk. "If you dial 1, the Prime Minister himself will answer." I dialed and I heard Imre Nagy's voice. "Hello. Imre Nagy speaking." I told him of my conversation with Ambassador Andropov. The Prime Minister sounded happy.

"We have received the message," Imre Nagy told me. "You may inform the Ambassador that our delegation is prepared to start talks this afternoon, at any hour the Soviet delegation cares to suggest. We suggest the Parliament building as the place for initial discussions. You might like to know that you are a member of the delegation. Please hurry over to my office so that we may begin policy talks at once." I conveyed Imre Nagy's reply to the Ambassador. We bade a polite farewell and I took my departure.

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After making arrangements for complete security of the Soviet Embassy, I sent the men that were not needed back to headquarters and drove to the Parliament building. There Imre Nagy told me that I had been dropped from the Hungarian delegation. There were a number of reasons for this. Principally, it had been suggested that the Soviet delegates might interpret my presence as an affront; it was only six weeks since my release from prison, and I had been rehabilitated only by the revolutionary government. It seemed best to avoid anything that might offend Soviet sensibilities. It was now Imre Nagy's personal wish that—as Pál Maléter, the new Minister of Defense, was a member of the delegation—I remain on hand to give military advice if needed. I returned to my headquarters where I learned that the Russians had put off the talks until the morning of November 3.

The talks opened in a civilized fashion and the first session ended in the afternoon of November 3. The delegates were to reassemble at 10 p.m. at the headquarters of the Soviet Supreme Commander in Hungary in Tököl, a town on Csepel Island in the Danube, some ten miles south of Budapest. In the mean time, the Chief of the Army Staff, Major General István Kovács, reported to me on the course of events (in my capacity as President of the Revolutionary Committee for National Defense). General Kovács told me that the commission had come to a full agreement on the following four points:

All Soviet troops would be withdrawn from all Hungarian territory by January 15, 1957.

Until the withdrawal was completed, the Hungarian government would be responsible for supplying Soviet troops with food, lodging, transportation, and fuel.

A joint Soviet-Hungarian commission would regulate all traffic, supplies, and contacts between Soviet military personnel and the Hungarian populace in order to prevent any misunderstandings or untoward occurrences.

In recognition of the fact that Soviet troops were in Hungary to aid the Hungarian people and that they bore them no ill will, festive and friendly farewell celebrations would be given for all Soviet garrisons in the country, and all Soviet war memorials on Hungarian soil were to be protected and maintained.

During the evening the Hungarian delegation set out for Tököl and arrived there between 9 and 10 p.m. the delegation was instructed to agree to all Soviet proposals and to bring forward to December 15 the deadline for Soviet military withdrawal, if the Soviet delegation did not feel that this would be too difficult to accomplish and if it

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would not offend the Soviet delegation. Should it be necessary, The Hungarian delegation was authorized to drop this condition and to sign the agreement arrived at during the first session of the talks.

The Hungarian delegation called my staff twice late that evening, but after midnight no further word came. When we tried to get in touch with the delegation, we could not get through. Shortly afterwards, a patrol was sent out from the Military Engineers' base on Háros Sziget, an island opposite Tököl. The tank patrol was ferried up an arm of the Danube toward Csepel Island, and it transmitted radio reports to us regularly. It kept us informed as it approached Tököl and drew up at the Soviet headquarters. Then silence; we could raise no answer.

The answer, instead, came from other sources as garrison after garrison on the Great Hungarian Plain reported that it was under heavy Soviet attack. Soon we could hear guns from the eastern outskirts of Budapest. The second massive Soviet attack had been launched against Hungarian freedom and against the government of the people's choice. As for the Hungarian delegation, it had been arrested by General Serov, head of the Soviet Secret Police. And thus another day of infamy dawned.

Imre Nagy's Last Command and Last Appeal

Throughout the revolution both the government and the people always had kept in mind the possibility of further Soviet aggression. The utmost difficulty, however, had beset the revolutionary leadership in its attempts to prepare for such an attack.

The foremost difficulty was the notorious sensitivity of the U.S.S.R. Any major strategic move in Hungary—even of a purely defensive nature—would be viewed by the Soviet authorities as a hostile move against the Soviet Union. And there was no feasible line of defense in Hungary which—even with the deployment of all of the country's armed forces—could have halted a full-scale Soviet assault for more than a day or so. Even if it had wished to, the government was in no position to make such strategic moves, because many key positions in the army were still in the hands of Stalinist generals who could have obstructed such actions. It had been impossible to remove these Stalinist senior officers hastily, because of those same Soviet sensibilities.

If conventional strategic defense against massive Soviet aggression were not feasible, why did not the revolutionary government prepare an all-out guerrilla war for such an eventuality? In the first place, Imre Nagy and his government refused to be a party to any kind of war against the U.S.S.R. But also, for purely physical reasons, such a guerrilla war was out of the question in Hungary. Hungary is essentially a

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flat plain devoid of sizable mountains, forests, or rugged terrain. Without such geographical features no standing guerrilla base could be built up and thus no lasting guerrilla campaign could be sustained. Guerrilla war, just like conventional war, was outside the realm of reality for the Hungarian government in 1956. In view of this, the Hungarian government, rather than try to prepare for an all-out defensive war against the Soviet Union, strove by all possible means to forestall Soviet aggression.

Despite the peaceful intentions and actions of the revolutionary government and indeed of the whole people, the leadership of the Hungarian armed forces still had to take certain defensive measures; not, of course, in the hope of a final victory in case of a Soviet attack, but to secure a few days', or at least a few hours', respite for the Nagy government to make its dispositions. A plan was evolved that, should the Soviet Union attack, Budapest was to be defended, and to this end a defensive ring was thrown up around the capital. On November 1, Colonel András Márton, the Commandant of the Zrinyi Academy (the General Staff College) and a member of the Revolutionary Committee for National Defense, was named commander of the outer defense perimeter of Budapest. Yet the Stalinist officers on the General Staff sabotaged preparations for even this minimal defensive system. The Rifle Division of Kaposvár, for instance, was to form part of the outer ring; but it was scattered in several different directions and only a small section reached its proper sector. Defense preparations were still in an early stage when the second Soviet attack was launched.

Because the buildup of Budapest's perimeter defenses was proceeding slowly, (as the Military Commandant of the city) I set up a cordon of infantry, field artillery, anti-aircraft artillery, and Freedom-Fighter units around Budaörs airfield. Two small aircraft were kept in readyness there, at the government's disposal. Until the Soviet attack overran the defenders of Budaörs, the airfield remained in the hands of loyal revolutionary troops.

I was in charge of the joint staffs of the Commander in Chief of the National Guard of Hungary and the Revolutionary Committee for National Defense, housed at police headquarters in the center of Budapest. The staff that served the headquarters of the Commandant of Budapest was posted nearby, in the building of the Ministry of National Defense.

At the time of the second Soviet attack I happened to be at the headquarters of the National Guard in Deák Square. I telephoned my chief of staff at once, to issue orders to the defense perimeter. Instead

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of listening to my orders, he handed the receiver to Lieutenant General Károly Janza, the Stalinist dismissed, former Minister of National Defense, who was not even authorized to be there. General Janza asked me to join him at the ministry to help prevent "the activities of Fascist bands." In other words, it was clear that, even as the Soviet attack was being launched, the Stalinist officers had managed to take over the topmost military staffs as well as the Ministry of National Defense.

It was impossible, therefore, to send orders to the troops through the proper command channels. Recognizing this agonizing fact, I repeatedly urged the Prime Minister to go on the air and announce the government's intentions. The first time I called him, Imre Nagy told me the whole affair was an absurd mistake. "Soviet Ambassador Andropov is here in my office," he said, "and he is trying to contact Moscow to ask for instructions. He is of the opinion that someone has made a tragic mistake, and he is trying to stop the slaughter." Up to the last minute Imre Nagy believed that he was not witnessing an act of infamy, but an unintentional disaster.

The Soviet Ambassador's presence in the Prime Minister's office at the very hour of his government's vicious attack is comparable to the presence of the Japanese mission in the U.S.A. at the time of Pearl Harbor. But Andropov's case was perhaps even more monstrous. In a state of revolution such as there was in Budapest during this "winter in November," there was every chance that terrified, frustrated, and outraged revolutionaries might seize the Ambassador and put him to death. What a sensational opportunity this would have been for Soviet propaganda! It is my opinion that this may have been precisely why the Soviet government ordered the Ambassador to go to the Parliament building, just as it opened its offensive against Hungary. The U.S.S.R. might have lost a diplomat but it would have gained an inestimable propaganda weapon with which to denounce the "barbaric Hungarians" whom the "civilized Russians" wanted to teach "law and order." Whatever the truth was, the Ambassador survived and Soviet aggression proceeded nakedly, as aggression—and not as a crusade to avenge a dead ambassador.

With a military situation demanding that something be done, my anguish was intense as the Prime Minister turned down each and every one of my suggestions. Because of his belief in the decency of the Soviet government and his lifelong commitment to humane and peaceful policies, Imre Nagy in fact ordered me to issue no directives to fight but, on the contrary, to do my utmost to prevent Hungarians from shooting back at Russians wherever possible without undue loss of life.

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During one of my many calls both my voice and my temper were raised as I demanded that the government decide that either Imre Nagy or I go on the air (Budapest Radio was still in our hands) and issue a general order to resist the invaders. With his voice raised too, Nagy replied: "You must know that an order to open fire or any such call means war. It is up to the government to make such decisions, not to the military leadership. The government will not engage in open war with the Soviet Union. The Freedom Fighters, wherever possible, must refrain from returning enemy fire."

I was bewildered by the Prime Minister's position. At about five o'clock on November 4, as Soviet tanks began to mass around my headquarters, I called Imre Nagy once more. "There are Soviet tanks in the immediate vicinity," I reported. "They do not seem to be attacking us but are turning toward the Parliament building" (where Nagy's office was). "Thank you," he replied. "I shall be requiring no further reports."

This was Imre Nagy's last order to the armed forces. Shortly afterwards he went on the air to deliver his last, famous appeal:

"In the early hours of this morning, Soviet troops launched an attack against our capital city with the obvious intention of overthrowing the lawful, democratic Hungarian government. Our troops are fighting. The government is at its place. I inform the people of the country and world opinion of this."

By this time I could no longer get through to Imre Nagy. Budapest was in flames, and new Soviet troops were entering the city in great strength. The avalanche could no longer be stopped. This last statement of the Prime Minister was very carefully worded and meticulously refrained from any implication the Soviet Union might have used as a pretext for its intervention. Unquestionably, he wanted to put on the record of history that the Russians were attacking and that the Hungarians were trying to defend themselves. And he carefully avoided any implication that he had encouraged this fight. He did not. He knew that if the Soviet Union started an act of aggression it would see it through. To resist such aggression Hungary was too small, vis-à-vis the world's second supreme power. Imre Nagy was a patriot. It pained him to see Hungarians dying in a gallant but futile battle. He would have considered it perhaps dishonest to weaken the resistance, but he was also reluctant to encourage it. He hoped that the end would come fast and with the least loss to his people. This might have been the reason for his last command and his last appeal.

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From the Battle of Nagykovacsi to the Bitter End

Without political leadership the revolutionary military command faced a grave decision. Should it call on the nation to resist the Soviet aggressors in a guerrilla war, start armistice negotiations, or just lay down arms? No other alternatives existed. These three possibilities were discussed at the Central Military Headquarters on Szabadsághegy [Freedom Mountain] to which the Soviet advance had compelled us to retire. There we received information about a spontaneous meeting of revolutionary leaders, local Freedom-Fighter leaders, and workers' representatives who had gathered at the Bólyai Military Academy, a training school for political officers in the Hüvösvölgy, a western suburb of Budapest. When the meeting had been called to order, a resolution was passed inviting me to preside over the group and to extend its scope as broadly as possible, to include all strata of the revolution. This enlarged representation was to meet to consider a draft resolution for an immediate armistice offer to the Soviet High Command in Hungary. About half of the Freedom Fighters who were serving at the Headquarters on Szabadsághegy voted for the armistice offer. The rest felt that, even if further fighting seemed to be hopeless in the final outcome, they would not surrender to the Soviet invaders. They were unwilling to put their arms or themselves at the mercy of the Soviet troops. They were also in principle reluctant formally to renounce the goals of the revolution in that manner. I joned this group.

The Soviet Army had absolute superiority in numbers and equipment. During our next few days at the headquarters on Szabadsághegy, it was clear from the regrouping of Soviet troops that an all-out attack against the hill was being planned. So the headquarters was moved to Nagykovácsi, a small town some 30 miles west of Budapest. From there we tried to contact and co-ordinate those Freedom Fighter groups still resisting in the immediate vicinity and in the mining area of Piliscsaba, Dorog, and Tata. Superior Soviet forces discovered the location of the headquarters and on November 11 opened a heavy assault on it with tanks, jet fighters, artillery and infantry. A bloody encounter ensued, known today in Hungary as the Battle of Nagykovácsi. After sustaining heavy losses, the headquarters was withdrawn during the night toward the west.

We bivouacked on various ridges of the Pilis, Vértes, and Bakony Mountains, while Soviet helicopters hovered overhead, tracking our line of retreat. We listened anxiously to foreign radio broadcasts, waiting and hoping for a change that somehow at some point would force the Soviet Union to negotiate with Imre Nagy after all. We hoped that

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then we could again offer him the services of the only surviving central organ, the joint headquarters of the National Guard of Hungary and the Revolutionary Committee for National Defense, to help him rebuild from the ruins. But as the days passed, that hope faded away. At last we realized that the tide that could never be turned by battle could not be turned by political means either. If there was no place for Imre Nagy and his political solution, there could be no place for us.

On November 14 the last pocket of resistance in Budapest collapsed when the workers on Csepel laid down their arms. In mid-November, threatened with Soviet encirclement again, I gave orders that the Hungarian military and Freedom-Fighter high command and the units immediately supporting it disband and withraw from the country in small groups. This operation was completed during the second half of November. We laid down our arms on Austrian soil, not before the Red Army.

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COMMUNICATIONS

Michael Walzer

On the Nature of Freedom

In our September–October issue we printed an article by David Spitz, entitled "Pure Tolerance: A Critique of Criticisms." Its subject was A Critique of Pure Tolerance, *a new book co-authored by Robert Paul Wolff, Barrington Moore, and Herbert Marcuse. Below Michael Walzer discusses the article, and David Spitz replies in turn.*

We have received a comment by Robert Paul Wolff which will appear in our next issue.—ED.

"Liberty," Herbert Marcuse writes, "is self-determination, autonomy . . . But the subject of this autonomy is never the contingent, private individual as that which he actually is or happens to be; it is rather the individual . . . who is capable of being free with the others."

"Freedom," replies David Spitz, "is not . . . 'self-determination, autonomy' . . . It is rather, as Hobbes properly said, the absence of chains." Here the issue between them is clearly joined. Spitz defends the liberal, "negative" conception of human freedom, at whose center stands a very special sort of man, man-by-himself. Freedom is the guarantee of his lonely selfhood, its protection against the others, conceived implicitly as enemies. Marcuse defends the Rousseauian view of freedom as citizenship, "positive" freedom, at whose center stands man-with-the-others, the others now conceived implicitly as colleagues.

The two theories are not logically and need not be practically contradictory (all of us have some colleagues and some enemies). But there is a certain tension between them, and a writer probably must choose to emphasize one or the other. It seems to me that Marcuse makes what generally has been and ought to be the democratic socialist choice. But he then goes on to accept just those characteristic distortions of "positive" freedom which have driven writers like

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Spitz to make the opposite choice. I want to argue that those distortions are in fact inconsistent with an adequately developed theory of freedom as citizenship. But it is necessary first to suggest the inadequacy, from the point of view of both democracy and socialism, of Spitz's choice.

The problem with the Hobbesian definition of freedom is that it makes it difficult to explicate certain of the most important uses of the word "free." When we say, for example, that the Athenian citizen, but not the Persian subject, was a free man, or that Frenchmen during the reign of Louis XIV were unfree, we are not talking only about the presence or absence of "chains" or, to use Hobbes's own phrase, "external impediments" to individual motion. If we insisted on using Hobbes's definition, we should have to say that no men have ever been free or could ever be, since it is impossible to imagine a social system which does not offer some significant resistance to voluntary motion. And we should have to say that no men have ever been or could ever be unfree—this side of the grave—for there is no environment, not even that of a concentration camp, totally resistant to all human motion.

Now it is certainly useful at times to talk about freedom as a matter of more or less, and to say that a man is free in this sphere of activity but not in that one (as Spitz does when he writes of "the particular freedoms granted in a specific society"). But we are saying something more than or different from this when we characterize the Athenian citizen or contrast democratic and authoritarian polities. We are talking precisely about communal autonomy and self-determination. When we say *citizen,* we are describing a man who bows to no external force but shares with his fellows the choice of the "impediments" he is going to have to live with. When we say *democracy,* we are describing a political system within which such choices are freely made (and not merely, as Spitz suggests, a society which accords to its members the "particular freedom" of political opposition).

Collective choices can and of course do become obstacles to individual action, especially to spontaneous or impulsive action. But this is not a conflict between freedom and unfreedom, which would be easy to resolve. It is a conflict within the world of freedom, between citizenship and individuality, and therefore very difficult to resolve. Such conflicts are the price of democracy; one can only avoid them by surrendering the rights and duties of citizenship and by accepting one or another sort of authoritarian rule. Then none of the socially necessary or superfluous "impediments" that we encounter will have been freely chosen and all of them can be opposed or evaded with a good conscience. Indeed, a great deal of freedom, in Hobbes's and Spitz's sense of the word, may be enjoyed by the subject of an authoritarian regime: he is free to do whatever the ruler does not prohibit (and if the ruler is prudent, most human activities will not be banned), and he is free also to evade the ruler's prohibitions whenever he can get away with it. Freedom, Hobbes wrote, lies in the silence, and, he ought to have added, the impotence, of the laws. But this is not the freedom of a free man, for a

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free man shares in the making of the laws which he subsequently obeys or evades.

But suppose citizens freely enact repressive laws; imagine censorship described as the collective choice of free men; think of individual artists or writers, their works expurgated or suppressed, being "forced to be free" —surely all this would involve a kind of double-think, destructive of freedom, however it is defined, and of rational discourse as well. It is with such prospects in mind that theorists like Spitz shudder at the equation of freedom with citizenship and at the definition of the citizen as a man who "gives the law to himself." That liberal shudder may well have its reasons —we all know its reasons and it would be inexcusable to ignore them—nevertheless, these are not philosophical reasons. They arise from historical experience, above all, from the disturbing spectacle of totalitarian government defended in the language of "positive" freedom. But this defense establishes no logical, but only ideological, connections. And there is no good reason for us to surrender to the mysteries of totalitarian ideology.

We must insist, instead, that freedom has its logical limit, which is unfreedom. Just as a free man cannot legitimately sell himself into slavery (as Rousseau argued), so a body of citizens cannot legitimately enact laws which undermine or annul the very character of citizenship. If this is sometimes done in their name, it is never done rightly. Since citizenship consists in free choice, citizens cannot consent to any laws which limit their future right or capacity to make choices. Their self-government entails their civil liberty, though it does not entail their absolute "negative" freedom. Social life of any sort requires that some "impediments" be raised against individual action; social life of a democratic sort logically requires that "impediments" like censorship always be rejected.

Choice is the inalienable right of the citizen; it is absurd to suggest that it can ever be surrendered or taken away in the name of citizenship. And it is the inalienable right of every citizen; for freedom must always be shared with the others. The very existence of society makes it inevitable that self-determination, if it is to have any reality, must be in large part a collective act, that alternatives must be confronted and choices made in some cooperative fashion. The autonomy not merely of individuals, but of individuals-in-groups, thus remains central to any general theory of human freedom.

It is certainly – and one would have thought obviously—central to any socialist theory of freedom. For it is difficult to be a socialist if one does not believe that men are capable of determining and accepting their social responsibilities in some genuinely free fashion, and that they ought to do so. This is the meaning of the word "commitment": to commit oneself is voluntarily to raise obstacles against one's own future irresponsibility. Commitment is self-determination. And a socialist society, insofar as it rejects every sort of authoritarianism, in economic as well as in political life, is totally dependent upon the commitments of its members. Those commitments must be freely made, their nature freely determined. But this is not only to say that they must be free; it is also to say

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that they must be determined and made. In this sense only—this very restricted sense—will men be forced to be free: they must be self-determining; they cannot rely upon some authoritative other. Now there is no other; they have to govern themselves.

Marcuse is right, then, to argue that "the only authentic . . . negation of dictatorship would be a society in which 'the people' have become autonomous individuals . . . human beings choosing their government and determining their life." And he is right also in insisting that the United States today, despite its democratic institutions, is not to any sufficient degree a society in which such choices and determinations are made. The most powerful tendencies in modern government, industry, communications, and education militate against human freedom, and there is little reason to quarrel with Marcuse's description of these tendencies. But it is necessary and crucially important to call into question his proposed antidote: the revolutionary dictatorship of a rational elite, or, in his own words, "a democratic educational dictatorship" run by "everyone who has learned to think rationally and autonomously . . . a small number indeed." This dictatorship would "enable [the others] to become autonomous. They [that is, the others] would have to be freed from the prevailing indoctrination . . ." It is curious that a philosopher who insists so vigorously upon an activist definition of freedom should fall so readily into the passive voice when talking about liberation. "Freedom," he writes, "is liberation." No, freedom is *self*-liberation; the struggle for freedom is an activity in which those who are to be free must be involved. Freedom, in Marcuse's sense, can never be the gift of a minority; only "negative" freedom can be given and received; "positive" freedom can only be taken. A revolutionary elite can, perhaps, set men free, or rather, set them loose; that is a purely negative act, the breaking down of prison walls, the shattering of a repressive regime. But no elite, however "progressive," can make free men, for the means of such making contradict the end of freedom. "Progress in freedom requires progress in the consciousness of freedom," Marcuse rightly says. But surely the consciousness of freedom must involve rational reflection upon alternative options, a recognition of one's own right to make choices, an acceptance of responsibility for the choices one makes. None of this can possibly be advanced by indoctrination or "precensorship" which necessarily limits the options and undermines individual responsibility.

The list of obstacles and difficulties on the way to free citizenship is very long. There are the years of oppression and the inertia and fearfulness they have bred, the established complexes of political and economic power, the force of the mass media, the vast size of modern polities, the existence of centralized bureaucratic systems, and so on. Now we must add, there is the dangerous elitism of those who see all these obstacles, who think that only they see them, that only they *can* see them, and who would make their fellowmen free without their agreement or participation.

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David Spitz

The Pleasures of Misunderstanding Freedom

Definitions, whether of liberty or of other political terms, are neither true nor false. They are useful or mischievous, and in any case they change over time. They are useful, ordinarily, when they enable people to communicate, i.e., to understand each other, or when they open concepts to further (and mutual) exploration. They are sometimes useful, at least to some men, when by failing to communicate, they enable a man or a group of men to achieve ends that otherwise might not be attained.

Definitions change because new circumstances often require new terms and instead of inventing such terms, men attribute new meanings to old words. They change also because new or derived languages, like the English (or the American), borrow multiple terms that describe the same phenomenon, e.g., freedom from *Freiheit* and liberty from *liberté*. Hence, where the Germans and the French have but a single term the Americans have two or more, and this may lead to confusion, especially where some men use the two terms interchangeably while others give a special meaning to each of them, as in the distinction between "liberty to" and "freedom from."

I mention these elementary considerations only because they are often overlooked or disregarded in contemporary discussions of liberty, and this failing—from which Michael Walzer is not, I fear, altogether exempt— leads both to serious misunderstandings and untoward consequences.

II

Consider first the striking difference between what may be called, broadly, the classical and modern definitions (or contexts) of freedom. To the Greeks, liberty meant not the freedom of the individual from encroachments by the state, but rather the freedom of a whole people, of the *polis*, from the rule of a tyrant or foreign oppressor. They conceived of the people—by which of course they meant only that small portion of the people who qualified as citizens—as a homogeneous unit, as a body of men who shared the same values and pursued a common way of life, and who therefore sought their fulfillment as men not in their private and diverse activities but in the life of the *polis* itself. To be a man, as Aristotle said, was preeminently to be a social or political animal. Hence the classical conception of liberty did not recognize, much less focus on, the right of an individual or group to do as he or it might choose; it built instead on the right of the people as a whole to follow its own ways. This is why Greek thinkers could identify the community with the state—the social and the cultural with the political—and liberty with a particular way of life. This is why Socrates could properly be charged with a crime for teaching disrespect for the gods, corrupting the youth, and

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why in turn Socrates in the *Republic* could urge that all those who did not conform to the established ways and teach the "right" things should be sent into exile.

With Hobbes and Locke and their successors we move to a quite different conception of liberty. Now the problem of liberty is focused inward, on the relationship between the individual and his government, whether that government be an "alien" power (as in Hobbes's *Leviathan*) or the people's own creature. With the authors of *The Federalist* we move a step further, for now it is seen that "the people" constitute not a homogeneous and monolithic force but a heterogeneous and divided society, and that a majority within that society may well utilize the powers of government to tyrannize over the minority (or minorities). But it remained for Tocqueville and John Stuart Mill to point out that the problem of liberty has still deeper and greater dimensions, that it goes beyond the mere relationship between the individual (or group) and the government to embrace all other relations which may affect the freedom of the individual. In particular, they called attention to the deprivations of liberty imposed by non-governmental powers—by majorities in the realm of custom and opinion, and by social and economic power blocs. The problem of freedom, then, is only at the outset a question of the liberty of a nation to live its life without interference from external powers. It is, not less importantly—but perhaps more importantly—also the problem of controlling internal powers, both governmental and non-governmental; of organizing the society so as to enable diverse individuals and groups with different and often conflicting creeds to live together without constant recourse to force and the authoritarian imposition of one group's creed upon others.

It was this problem that Mill—quite properly, I believe—conceived to be the crucial problem for the society of his day. And it remains, all too unhappily, the problem that bedevils us today. This is why Mill is still the seminal figure, and provides the indispensable key, to the understanding of the problem of liberty in our time.

Now Michael Walzer would have us look not to Mill but to Rousseau for this key. But how does Rousseau resolve this problem? The answer is simplicity itself: *by eliminating the diversities, and with them the freedoms that have created and if unimpeded would continue to create those diversities.* For Rousseau, it is impossible to live at peace with those we believe to be damned, i.e., those who hold different creeds from our own. Hence (he tells us) there must be a single religion, a civil religion, whose articles should be fixed by the sovereign, and disobedience to which should be punished by banishment or death. To be sure, tolerance is to be given to all religions that tolerate others, but only so long as their dogmas contain nothing contrary to the duties of citizenship. And those duties require, above everything else, compliance with the laws.

Now, when Rousseau talks of the sovereign he means not the will of all but the *general will*, which is the will for the general good. This will can be known, and in practice is generally to be determined, by the will of the majority. But it is possible, Rousseau admits, that the general will may on

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occasion be known better by a single individual than by the rest of the community. In any case, the general will—however determined—remains sovereign, inalienable, and above all infallible. From all of which it follows, according to Rousseau, that the citizen in obeying the laws is doing precisely what he ought to do, what he himself "really" wants to do, for he is then doing what is "right." And if the citizen is too blind to see or too weak to do what is "right," if he is so foolish or wicked to wish to disobey the laws, or a particular law, he is clearly wrong; for he then erroneously supposes that he knows better than the sovereign—whose will, let it be remembered, is an infallible will—what is good and just, not merely for the society but also for him. For what is the citizen apart from society? Opposition to the laws, then, is never warranted, for the laws call upon the citizen to do only what he would himself choose to do if he were more enlightened than he is.

Under such circumstances, to permit him to act contrary to the laws is to permit him to act against his own true interests, and this (in Rousseau's view) is an absurdity. This is why, Rousseau emphasizes, he must be compelled to obey, and why such compulsion is not "really" coercion but rather freedom; for it only forces him to be free, that is, to be himself, to realize his own true interests. But this is also why, despite all his democratic preachments about equality and the common good, Rousseau is properly viewed—at least with respect to this portion of his teaching, accompanied as it is with a defense of censorship—as the godfather of modern totalitarianism.

We can now see why Marcuse finds Rousseau rather than Mill companionable. But why Walzer who professes a commitment to *democratic* socialism should also look to Rousseau passes my comprehension. Walzer says: "... a free man shares in the making of the laws which he subsequently obeys or evades." But no such evasion is countenanced by Rousseau. And what Walzer mistakes is precisely what Mill perceived: that men who share in the making of the laws do not necessarily get the laws they want, that government even by the people is not miraculously transformed into a government of each by himself but remains in all essentials a government by some over others. Thus, to share in the process of law-making is only to share—and in practice always unequally, for all democratic states are disfigured by inequities in their systems of representation and political structure—in the choice of a government; but a government so chosen may reflect not the will of all, not even the general will, but the will of a majority that may be selfish, iniquitous, perhaps tyrannical, and certainly sometimes wrong. To plead, then, as Walzer does, for the communal autonomy that he associates with Athenian citizenship and with the doctrine of Rousseau is to argue for a freedom indistinguishable from conformity; it militates against the very self-determination that Walzer also values.

These reflections are not put forward to speak against the idea of community, or the obvious fact that self-determination, however construed, can take place only with and through participation in a communal life. Man and society are always, to use the commonplace phrase, inextricably inter-

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twined. But to recognize that an individual man is an issue of his society in much the same way that a child is an issue of his parents is not necessarily to conclude that the interests of the man are identical in all respects to the interests of his society, any more than the interests of the child may be said to be always identical to those of his parents. Men have separate and dividing as well as common interests, and a wise political philosophy will seek not only to assure the bonds of community but to provide for the cultivation of differences as well. I know of nothing in Mill, or in socialist writers generally, that militates against this awareness. Indeed, if we are to take seriously the humanistic stress that Marx gave to individuality in his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* and other writings, it becomes a matter of more than ordinary importance that socialists should look first to the defense and promotion of what little individuality still resists the conformist pressures of our time.

III

Walzer, like many others, supposes that the problem of freedom is by and large the problem of positive versus negative liberty. But while these are convenient polar extremes—and like Walzer I shall treat them, at least initially, as such—it is important to remember that they do not displace the many variations that occupy the vast middle ground; nor do they account for a wide range of meanings outside the spectrum embraced by the positive-negative dichotomy. Of these other meanings, one is so widely held and frequently repeated—even by Walzer himself—that it is necessary to touch upon it here, if only briefly.

This is the notion that freedom is something that one either has or has not. It is a totality, so that one is either a free man (or a member of a free society), or a slave. So we and generations of schoolchildren were taught when we were told of Patrick Henry's celebrated plea: "Give me liberty or give me death." And so President Eisenhower reaffirmed, discussing the conflict between America and the Soviet Union, when he said (in his first Inaugural Address): "Freedom is pitted against slavery; light against dark."

But whatever the emotive pleasures produced by these words, they are literally absurd. The choice before Patrick Henry was never that of liberty or death. Henry was not a slave. He had "liberty"—certainly the liberty to enter a church of his own choosing, to utter words of defiance to his parliament and king, to do the many things that slaves and men in prison were not free to do, even to use the Negro slaves who waited outside the Virginia church to serve as stepping-blocks for their freedom-demanding white masters to mount their horses. What disturbed Patrick Henry was the denial of a particular liberty, the liberty to choose representatives to his governing body. This may well have been a vital liberty, but it was not the whole of liberty. Other liberties still remained.

So too with President Eisenhower's dictum. Surely it cannot be maintained that ours is a system of total freedom, a political and social order devoid of restraints—without laws and police and prisons. Nor can it be said that the Soviet system is simply one of slavery, without even such elemental

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liberties as the freedom to choose one's spouse, or one's food and drink, or one's clothes. Even in the most tyrannical government there are some who support it and who consequently think themselves free, and others who are in some respects free. What the President undoubtedly meant but did not say was that the freedoms secured in the American democracy are in his judgment more significant than the freedoms provided by the Soviet dictatorship. Had he said this, he would have been literally correct but rhetorically less impressive. For the choice before us would then have been less stark, and to the people (and perhaps himself) less clear.

Hence, even though many of the decisive cultural and political liberties are present in the American system, but not in the Soviet system, it remains true that in both systems there are some freedoms, and in both systems those freedoms are secured by the imposition of restraints on those persons or groups who might otherwise interfere with them. The real issue, accordingly, does not emerge from a simple (and false) dichotomy between freedom and unfreedom—whatever the latter might be—but from alternative and always complex systems of freedoms and restraints. And the problem of freedom, otherwise conveniently obscured, is the difficult determination of a standard or value that will enable us to distinguish the more from the less important freedoms. It is also the problem of determining *who* shall enjoy the vital freedoms, under what conditions or circumstances, and to what degree. Not all freedoms can be simultaneously secured, and not all men can enjoy the freedoms provided. The delineation of *which freedoms for whom* remains the fundamental task of any intelligible theory of liberty.

We can now see more clearly the essential misunderstanding, and consequent fallacy, in Walzer's appeal to Athenian as distinct from Persian freedom, or to the freedom of democratic as distinct from authoritarian polities. By the standard of communal autonomy, all these systems are free, for all govern themselves free from external control. By the standard of self-determination, none is completely free (or unfree), for in all of these systems men enjoy some liberties and suffer some restraints —restraints which are in some measure not of their own making or desire.

Moreover, to recognize, as Walzer does, that there is a necessary conflict between citizenship and individuality, is to admit the one point that sufficiently destroys his argument. For it is to admit, with Aristotle—and, may I dare add, with Mill—that the problem of freedom is always to distinguish, in one way or another, the realm that is Caesar's from that which is man's; for it is not always the same thing to be both a good citizen and a good man. What Mill tried to formulate as a matter of principle is what every democratic state tries to achieve as a matter of practice — namely, to distinguish those areas or activities in which men are properly to be left alone from those in which they are properly subject to coercion, to distinguish the community (and its cultural life) from the state (and its coercive order). And however difficult the drawing of such a line may be, the refusal to attempt it, the denial that it needs to be drawn, is precisely what

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characterizes a totalitarian, as distinct from a democratic, state. This is indeed why I shudder at Walzer's equation of freedom with citizenship rather than with man.

IV

We come now to the question of positive versus negative freedom. In a sense, this is a false or misleading question, for liberty is neither the one nor the other but simply the state of being free; and being free means that a man is left alone to do what he wants to do. But men like to play with words, and the word "wants" was quickly redefined to become the term "really wants." For (in this ploy), what a man thinks he wants, and even says he wants, is not necessarily what he "really wants." This can only be determined, it is said, by one able to distinguish between the apparent and the real, or between that which is immediataely or momentarily desired (a particular apple) and that more ultimate end for the sake of which he desires it e.g., good health); for what is thought to be a man's interest (eating the particular apple) may actually be harmful (if the apple is unripe or poisoned) and contrary to his real or true interest. Mere or negative freedom, then, is in this view not only an empty freedom but a dangerous freedom. Santayana likes to use the term "vacant freedom"; other philosophers have indulged in more derogatory language. Indeed, it is not freedom at all, for while freedom implies the right to choose, rational men choose (or mean to choose) only what is good; and if what they "think" is good is not "really" good, why then they will not choose it. From all this it follows that knowledge—of what is good and right and just—is indispensable to "true" liberty; that without this knowledge men cannot make the "right" choices and be "truly" free.

Such knowledge, however, is not given to all men. This would seem to suggest that not all men can be free, and such would indeed be the case were it not for a saving factor—those who have such knowledge can and do make it available to others. And those others, by acting in accord with that knowledge, can also be free.

The crucial question then is: how and by whom is that right knowledge to be revealed? The answers are multiple, but I shall consider only two here. First and most immediately, that knowledge (it is said) is incorporated in the laws. The state (Hegel) or the sovereign (Rousseau) being rational and right, the laws proclaimed by the state are also right. Hence freedom consists in obedience to the laws; at the very least, it is, as Montesquieu said, "a right of doing whatever the laws permit."

Now clearly, if men are to avoid legal punishments, if they are to stay out of prison, it will behoove them to obey the law. In this limited sense, freedom does indeed entail obedience to the law. But it is surely evident that to secure this freedom, it is necessary first to surrender the liberty of doing whatever the laws do not permit; it is necessary first to submit to the restraints of the law. Thus men are free to do only some things, not all things; they are not completely free. Rousseau and Hegel and their disciples, however, deny this conclusion. They affirm, to the contrary, that even submission to the law is freedom. The law, they say, does not "really" impose a restraint; rather, because it expresses

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one's "real" rather than actual will, it truly enables a man to realize himself, to attain what he "really" wants. This is what Rousseau means when he advances the paradox that men shall be forced to be free.

But this is to remove all semblance of meaning from our ordinary language. For in this conception, whether a state restrains men, or restrains a restraint on restraints on men, they are in every case free. What then does the word restraint mean? And how can any law, since it embodies our "real" will—if we but knew this as our rulers know it—be anything but an act of freedom? To speak properly, we should rather have to say that the law that imposes a restraint is a just law, that the restraint is warranted, but it is still a restraint. Moreover, is it always the case that the law embodies the real will or real purpose of the individual who is compelled to obey? The state or sovereign, despite Hegel and Rousseau, can err. The individual, not the state, may be right. In that case, the law by forbidding a man to do what he wants to do, or by compelling him to do what he does not want to do, is invading his freedom. And surely, if we survey the laws enacted by various states, even democratic states, we cannot but conclude that many of those laws are harmful and unjust. They may satisfy the interests of some men, but not of all men. Hence obedience to the laws may assure freedom for some men but not for others.

This brings us to the second major group that believes in obedience as freedom. They agree that such freedom is not to be found in mere obedience to the law, for the law may be wrong, and in any case there is a morality above the law. They argue instead that men must obey what is "right," that freedom consists in obedience to the truth, to the good, to the right morality, to the will of God. Since no man seeks to do evil, but every man seeks to do what is good, freedom (in their view) is not the right to choose wrongly, to do whatever one might please; it rather is, as Fulton Sheen said, "the right to do what you *ought*," to go back to a "Truth which is inseparable from the purpose of man; namely union with his final end, who is God. As man corresponds in his thinking and in his actions with that purpose, he is free because he is true." And so John Winthrop instructed the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay. Explaining that true liberty is always maintained and exercised through subjection to authority, Winthrop employed the analogy of a woman choosing her husband, "yet being so chosen, he is her lord, and she is to be subject to him, yet in a way of liberty, not of bondage; and a true wife accounts her subjection her honor and freedom, and would not think her condition safe and free, but in her subjection to her husband's authority."

Now there is doubtless a sense in which this argument may be made to appear a plausible one; for if one freely chooses to enter a contract he cannot be said to have lost his freedom by being bound to its terms. Consequently a wife, or a citizen, can be free though bound. But the restrictions imposed by that contract do not cease to be restrictions, and even though they may provide safety and honor they do not in themselves provide freedom. One who freely chooses to be a wife, or a student, or a soldier, or a citizen, does not thereby continue to be wholly

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free. Even if such a person *felt* free, it does not follow that he *is* free; for there is a vast difference between *feeling* free and *being* free. To act, therefore, according to the truth, or to the good, or to the right morality, or to the will of God, may afford great comfort and pleasure, but only if the person committing the required action does so as a result of a choice freely made can he be said also to be free.

Moreover, to argue that some one other than himself—be that Some One a person or a church or a state—knows better than he does what is "right," is to argue a great deal. It is of course sometimes true, for not every man's opinion is always as good as every other man's. But it is surely the magic of government—political or otherwise—that men rule who are often less knowing, less wise, less just, than some of those who are ruled. And even where the ruled are wrong, is it not the meaning of freedom that men have a right to make mistakes, that self-realization consists not in doing what another requires you to do but in doing what you, fallible and imperfect though you may be, want to do? If freedom implies choice—and this Walzer concedes—it entails the right to choose rightly or wrongly, and not merely to choose what another affirms to be right.

The quest for self-realization, then, if it is also the quest for freedom, must be sought outside the realm of positive liberty; for this is no more than a semantic device to obscure a brutal and demeaning reality—that so to realize oneself one must in fact abandon that self and must submit to another person's will.

V

The virtue of negative freedom is that it recognizes, with Kant, the obvious truth that "out of the crooked timber of humanity no straight thing was ever made." Whatever the respects in which men are equal, whatever their common interests or common stakes, they remain in some measure different men; each is an *individual*, a unique person. Consequently each has a somewhat different road to follow, a different "nature" to fulfill, a different "self" to realize. Society enacts rules, in the form of laws and social sanctions, that are universal in character. They apply to all men in the same way. But the individual, if he is to realize himself as a unique person, needs room for his own development, his own differentiation. Hence the problem of freedom, for him, reduces itself to the broad question: How much will he be left alone?

This does not make him an enemy of others; only a primitive mind can say: who is not like me is against me. Nor does it remove him from the fellowship or society of others; to be different in some things is not to be different in all things. The issue is never, as Walzer puts it, "man-by-himself" versus "man-with-the-others." Rather is it the question how man can be himself at the same time that he is a man among others: how he can be both an individual and a social animal.

It is unfortunately true that some men have falsified the question of negative freedom. Believing, for example, that law is a restraint and that all restraints are chains, they have leaped, with Hobbes, from the correct understanding of liberty as the absence of chains to the incorrect conclusion that

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liberty is consequently to be found only in the silence or interstices of the law. ". . . the laws being removed," wrote Hobbes, "our liberty is absolute. . . . For law is a fetter, right is freedom, and they differ like contraries." Or they have erroneously supposed, with Bentham, that "every law is an evil for every law is an infraction of liberty." That men are free only when they are unrestrained is true, and to the degree that Hobbes and Bentham grasped this truth they were eminently correct. But it does not follow that all laws are merely restraints. Some laws restrain restraints—or, as T. H. Green liked to say, hinder hindrances—and thereby free men from the restrictions to which they would otherwise be subjected. This function of law—to block or prevent interferences with freedom—derives from the necessary fact that men who are unrestrained inevitably collide with one another; some resolution, some adjustment, must consequently be made. That Hobbes and Bentham, for all their learning and insight, failed adequately to perceive that law then becomes not merely a restraint but a restraint on a restraint—for how else is the weaker to be protected from the stronger?—is not a reason for our failing fully to apprehend it. And if to this we add the recognition that freedom is not a totality but a complex of many particular freedoms, the enjoyment of which may (and generally does) require the imposition of corresponding restraints, then we can appreciate the true problem and multiple dimensions of freedom—which is the ordering and selection from among the many (and some equally ultimate) liberties those that are most highly prized, and the imposition of concomitant restraints that will prevent others from impairing these prized liberties.

So to arrange and protect liberties is to assure men certain areas in which they will be left alone—perhaps only in some measure or for a limited time, perhaps only under certain conditions. But however qualified those areas of liberty may be, it is within and only within those areas that men find their freedom. For to be free is still no more than to be left alone, and what a man does when he is left alone is for him alone to decide. Perhaps he wants only to breathe the clean air, to step outside the prison walls. That is enough for liberty, for that at the moment is enough for him. And no one who has yearned for that fresh air of freedom can doubt that such negative freedom, while not assuredly *the* end of life, is one of the essential and really meaningful ends of life. At the very least, it is the prerequisite to a human existence.

To say that negative freedom so construed is the prerequisite to a human existence is to say only that without such freedom man is less than human; he is not a man. But this is to say a good deal. For what is a man if, as Aristotle insisted, he is not distinguished from the other animals by his reason, or by his potential for intellectual growth? And how can he be that man if he is not permitted to exercise his reason? To exercise one's reason means that he must be free to choose; and to choose freely means that he may choose rightly or wrongly. To have another make that choice for him, on the ground that that other knows better what the right choice should be than the person restrained, is to deny him his identity as a rational creature, as a man. It is to re-

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fuse him the right to self-realization. It is rather to make him realize another's conception of his self. And this is to keep him forever as a child, as a less than complete human being.

This is why, when all is said and done, one who believes in the autonomy of the individual, who pleads for the principle of self-realization, must opt for negative as distinct from positive freedom.

VI

But liberty, I have said, is properly to be understood neither as negative nor as positive freedom. It is simply the state of being free. And being free means that one has areas of choice within an ordered system of particular liberties and concomitant restraints.

Hence there is no such thing as a completely free and autonomous man. From the moment he is born into the world the individual is subjected to prohibitions and commands, to rules laid down first by his parents and then by his friends, his church, his school, his state, and his several voluntary (and perhaps involuntary) associations. To seek his self-realization in the face of these external pressures is to seek it, and perhaps to find it, only as a member of society. He remains always a social animal even as he pursues and affirms his individuality.

It serves no useful purpose to close one's eyes to this reality. If democratic socialism is to make its way, it must do so not by rejecting this reality but by accepting it. The task then is to determine which elements in that complex reality hinder or obstruct one's quest for individuality—what shortcomings exist in educational and economic opportunities, what deficiencies characterize the social and political structure, and what changes, radical or otherwise, are consequently required if individuality is to be secured meaningfully. That the value of individuality does not, and indeed cannot, displace the value of community, goes almost without saying. For no man can find himself apart from his membership in society. He is still a social animal. As such, he remains concerned to satisfy both his common and his particular interests. If socialism is, as I believe, a moral and not merely an economic principle, then no socialist theory worthy of the name can neglect either of these elements of man's nature. That Mill, among others, perceived this truth and endeavored to build upon it, is surely of greater moment than the work of those who foolishly seek to resolve the problem by wiping out half of it.

Not only is Marcuse's antidote, then, no antidote at all. Not only is his cure worse than our disease. He is a bad doctor, because he neither knows what it means to be healthy nor how to approach the problem so as to make the patient well.

VII

I would add but one last comment. It is that, throughout the history of freedom, men have sought to identify the meaning of the word freedom with the things they hold to be good. It is easy to understand why this should be so. The word freedom has an honorific glow. The things men hold to be good have not always seemed to be good to others. To make those things *appear* to be good, whether or not they really are good, was the almost natural consequence. Since the ultimate object sought or thus secured was deemed to be good, the deception was judged use-

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ful and proper and the gain pleasurable. In time the pleasures of misunderstanding freedom proved so rewarding that men ceased to think of it as a misunderstanding and identified that misunderstanding with the very meaning of the word. Thus it is that the term freedom today carries a variety of meanings, some visibly at odds with the ordinary understanding of the term.

But if men are to communicate with each other, if men are to be honest with each other, it is surely time to use the word properly. The pleasures of misunderstanding freedom are trivial when compared to the pleasures of pursuing truth.

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BOOKS

Howard N. Meyer

A Century of Dishonor

THE PETITIONERS: THE STORY OF THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE NEGRO, by Loren Miller. New York: Pantheon. 461 pp. $8.95.

"The Negro has been the only American who has constantly made an issue of democracy," wrote Philip Berrigan, S. J. last year. That he did not overstate his case by very much was shown by the Court's decision obliterating the last vestiges of the poll tax. This anti-democratic barrier, whatever its original motivation, had been color blind. But the ruling that will benefit poor whites of the tidewater and the hill country was won by Negro plaintiffs; its outcome is the fruit of decades of struggle initiated by Negroes and supported by whites interested in interracial justice.

Judge Loren Miller's *The Petitioners* was published on the eve of the final poll tax decision. It is a work that has long been needed. One cannot really understand the last dozen years' decisions without an appreciation of their place in the segment of "Negro His tory" that has unfolded at the bar of the Court. Historians say the Dred Scott decision's principal significance lay in Justice Taney's reaching out to strike down the Missouri Compromise and deny Congress the power to outlaw slavery in the territories. *The Petitioners* illuminates the background of the case, not only as an epsiode in our national political history, but also as the genesis of a judicial style that marked the adjudication of race relations cases up to our day. The fruit of an opinion that Judge Miller shows to have been "composed in varying parts of suspect law, garbled history, and shoddy sociology" was the denial of citizenship even to free Negroes. It is incidental but enlightening that the Court was tampered with—and that President Buchanan already knew what the Court's decision would be when he asked the nation to abide by it.

When we read the history of the post-Civil War decisions with the benefit of the insights offered here, we see that the doctrinal aspects of the decision were devastating. What was pervasively to affect the course of our history was not the protection of slavery in the territories; it was the injection into the Constitution of the racism that was the fruit of pro-slavery apologetics. The spirit of the Scott decision, declaring the Constitution to be a white man's document, was to hover over the conference room during six decades of cruel decision-making by judges oblivious to the amendments intended to erase Taney's doctrines.

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Wars have generally been followed by treaty settlements, negotiated or imposed, that record the terms on which the late foes will co-exist. The American Civil War has not infrequently been described as one between two nations, in the sense that North and South had developed, during the fifties, characteristics of separate nationality. Its treaty settlement was evolved in the Congressional action and national debate that produced the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments. The agreement on freedom, equality, and suffrage was in a sense tri-lateral: the Negroes of the South had qualities of nationhood, and through their spokesmen, such as Frederick Douglass, and their advocates, such as Thaddeus Stevens and Charles Sumner, they were able to convince the moderates of the justice and the necessity of the terms on which the three nations were to be welded into one.

Apart from the threat of force or reprisal, only the "national honor" can evoke a national commitment. That honor was pledged to the War Amendments: as one black regiment's Colonel said, while mustering out his men a century ago: "Soldiers: You have done your duty and acquitted yourselves as men . . . The nation guarantees to you full protection and justice."

This guaranty of protection and justice was repeatedly dishonored in the decades that saw the demolition of the really impressive civil rights laws bequeathed by the Reconstruction Congresses. The picture that emerges teaches us that neither we, nor our Court, have done so much for the Negro in the past decade. Supposed experts such as Anthony Lewis Jr. talk of the "racial situation" as a "telling example of the Court's function as a forum for those without a political voice." The great lesson to be learned is that the Court first helped to still that political voice, by suppressing the rights that make a political voice meaningful—that the Court has been giving nothing new to the Negro: it is guiltily giving back bits and pieces of what *it* took away.

It is important to remember that Berea College *wanted* to remain integrated in 1905 (its 1854 Charter began "God hath made of one blood all the nations that dwell upon the face of the earth"): when Kentucky forbade the free association of the students, the Court, including Holmes, voted for Kentucky. The Yankee from Olympus voted wrong in the very first race relations case that came before him, displaying "the chilly and detached, almost cynical, manner that would be his trademark whenever civil rights were considered during his long service on the Court," as Judge Miller sums it up.

The Petitioners properly refrains from attributing sole guilt to the Court for the heritage with which we entered the 1930's; and the book pointedly produces precedent for the current fashion of quietly ignoring or emasculating laws two or ninety-two years old, while going through the motions of asking for new laws. The current President and Attorney General have left unexercised (like all their predecessors since the eighties) the authority to prosecute criminally the many state officials who excluded Negroes from juries, an authority that survived the depredations of the post-Reconstruction Court. Why, one must ask, in the lamentations that followed

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the death of the 1966 bill, was there no voice raised to demand enforcement of the old law that already covered the same ground as one of the dead bill's principal provisions?

The answer one is obliged to suggest is that Americans do not know "who they are and how they got that way"—to quote Lerone Bennett's terse statement of the full potential of the movement inadequately described by the phrase "Negro History." For the remedial education of those whose schooling was marred by the bleached product offered as Social Studies, *The Petitioners* is a fine starting point. Its clarity and readability make it possible for the lay reader to pierce the veil of double-speak that the Court and its white historians have drawn over the racist and anti-constitutional line of decisions that justified old Louis B. Boudin's 1932 phrase, "the most disgraceful chapter in the judicial history of the country."

Those words were written just as the tide began to turn. It should comfort the intellectuals who were energized to protest by the Sacco-Vanzetti case, and then transferred their energies to build the Scottsboro case into a *cause célèbre*, to have Judge Miller's appraisal that the shift in the Court's attitude began with the rulings which saved those Negro defendants. I reserve the right to disagree with his discounting of the contribution of the demonstrations at American consulates and embassies. I prefer to think that, after almost a century of dishonor, Parisian taxi-drivers and London dockers and German Socialists helped to bring about the beginning of the restoration of the Fourteenth Amendment as a guaranty of interracial justice, of fair trial for the poor of all colors. All who united to fight for Sacco and Vanzetti and then regrouped to fight and win for the Scottsboro boys are entitled to share the credit—even if someone were to write a book tomorrow to prove that those Southern gals *were* raped.

On Legal Abuses of Psychiatry

PSYCHIATRIC JUSTICE, by Thomas S. Szasz. New York: Macmillan. 283 pp. $6.95.

Dr. Thomas S. Szasz, in his latest essay into the abuses of psychiatry, considers what he calls the psychiatric denial of the right of trial: the procedure by which the accused is denied trial on the grounds of mental incompetence.

It is Szasz's contention that the relationship of psychiatry to authority is much too close, and that this results in a serious threat to individual liberty. When a man is labelled "crazy," his denial is often taken to demonstrate the severity of his disease. The psychiatrist—testifying in court—practices a vaguely mystical art; he

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does not say "crazy," but "the patient suffers from manic-depressive psychosis," or "the patient exhibits the behavior pattern of a paranoid schizophrenic." Once such a diagnosis is formally made, a man loses stature and rights in a host of ways, not the least being the loss of his rights in law (which includes the management of his civil affairs, and his rights in a criminal proceeding).

Szasz attacks the conception that the behavioral phenomena loosely grouped under the name of mental diseases are illnesses analogous to somatic diseases. He contends that the terms used to label abnormal behavior phenomena are primarily useful as diagnostic categories in the clinical practice of psychiatry. Whenever these names are transmogrified—as they are when used out of a psychiatric context—they invariably translate as *crazy* or *mentally ill*. But, since aberrations in mental behavior are not analogous to physiological dysfunctions, such clinical terms cannot be applied with an equivalent medical authority.

Challenging more than the precision or accuracy of psychiatric determinations, Szasz challenges their relevance to the right to stand trial. He argues that, in a question of competence, we are—or ought to be—only interested in the defendant's capacity to play his assigned *role*, rather than in his health, mental or otherwise. Leukemia, for instance, is a serious illness, but it does not necessarily impair a man's ability to assume the role of defendant in a trial. In such a case, the initiative for seeking relief on the grounds of inability to stand trial is left to the defendant and his counsel. One could hardly imagine a prosecutor seeking to declare a defendant incompetent to stand trial on somatic medical grounds, over the defendant's objection.

But in psychiatric proceedings, a non-legal discipline is brought in, not only where it is not needed and will provide no extra information, but where it can work counter to a principal's interests. If a man is a raving maniac, and manifests this condition by inappropriate behavior in court, the judge can easily *judge* him incompetent to stand trial. Similarly, if defense counsel informs the court that his client is unable to understand the charge against him and/or is unable to assist in making his defense, the court has good evidence of incompetence. This can be simply decided, precisely because incompetence is not a beneficial defense strategy. That is, the charge remains pending, and the defendant is remanded to custody (usually in a state hospital for the criminally insane), until he is competent to stand trial.

The severest attack the incompetency proceeding makes on our libertarian institutions is its disruption of our adversary system of justice. The foundation of this system is the conception of the defense attorney and the State's attorney as opposing duelists who score by obtaining convictions or acquittals, depending on their role. That is, they are seen as men whose rewards reinforce their roles. The judge is the referee, familiar with the rules and charged with the responsibility of insuring that the scoring is in accord with these rules (which are, in turn, agreed to *a priori*).

But the psychiatric proceeding undermines all of these functions. The

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State's attorney, by asserting his unwillingness to press charges against an individual because he is mentally incompetent, purports to act as the defendant's agent. That is, the defendant is transformed into a patient and thus is no longer the object of the prosecutor's legal aggression; but he also loses his formal protections against this aggression. By this usurpation, the defense attorney is stripped of responsibility and can no longer aid his client. By the mystical nature of the proceedings—a result of the introduction of psychiatric expertise—the judge loses his unique grasp of the rules. Therefore he becomes incompetent to fulfill his role as arbiter. The end result of this wholesale abdication is that the psychiatric expert dictates the patient/defendant's fate. But the psychiatrist is invariably an *agent of the state*, and, as such, not impartial.

The role of the examining psychiatrist as an agent of the state—and therefore as an adjunct to the prosecutor and antagonist of the defendant—is insufficiently recognized. His psychiatric examinations (as opposed to those in which the defense is "not guilty by reason of insanity") are almost never initiated at the behest of the accused. Nor is the accused provided access to *free* non-government psychiatrists, as he is to free non-government counsel. Usually the psychiatrist is called into the proceedings by the prosecutor or the judge (in New York City, the police can take this step *before* the accused is even indicted). Not surprisingly, the examiner's judgment usually confirms the suspicion that the accused is incompetent to stand trial. One of the less lovely ancillary results of the directed examination is that information pertaining to the alleged offense elicited by the examining psychiatrist can be used by the prosecutor. That is, such information is not protected by the privilege traditionally surrounding medical consultations.

The incompetency device is used in cases where the legal means of punishment are either not available or not consonant with what judge or prosecutor deems the defendant's threat to society. Since this device can be employed even in misdemeanor offenses, and since the defendant's desire to plead guilty is no defense against it (because the substantive issue never comes to trial), it provides a means of incarceration which by-passes the rudiments of due process. The finding of mental incompetence is often a life sentence with no appeal except to him who has initially served as judge and executioner—the psychiatrist.

The whole purpose of the incompetency device is obviously to refrain from trying and punishing mental defectives of one sort or another. The incarceration in a state mental hospital which follows from a finding of incompetency, is supposed to remedy the defect and to return the defendant to trial. But hospitals for the criminally insane are understaffed, underequipped, and they have an extremely low priority in the community's scale of interests. They are little more than penal custodial institutions, not more beneficial to their inmates than prisons, and perhaps less so. You can get out of prison within a stated time, but you cannot become "competent" within a stated time. Often enough, in practice, the time is never.

There are two ways of looking at

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the problem. One is to challenge the place of mental competence in a criminal trial as a deciding factor in the issue of guilt or innocence—which is a question of fact. That is, the whole issue can be postponed until after the substantive trial—and then brought in only to abet the judge in deciding the nature and duration of punishment, as probationer's reports are used. Or, the use of the present procedure can be defended and the means of deciding competence altered. The responsibility can be put back into the hands of the judge—whose role is that of arbiter—and into those of the defense counsel—whose role demands that he be concerned with the defendant's best interests. But in any case, it is necessary to remove the psychiatrist from the role of judge.

EDWARD A. VOLKMAN

Marxism: An End to Revolution

MARXISM IN MODERN FRANCE, by George Lichtheim. New York and London: Columbia University Press. 212 pp. $6.75.

In the late nineteenth century, Marxism was superimposed on an already formidable revolutionary movement in France. Marxism claimed the faith of proletarians and revolutionary intellectuals alike, as the union of theory and practice which the movement required but would not find in France's own intellectual and revolutionary past. In his *Marxism in Modern France*, George Lichtheim denies that French Marxism even attained this union. However, his study of the interplay of Marxist theory and practice in France serves to reveal remarkably well the essential development of each.

The first part of the book examines this interplay through about 1948. The remainder he devotes primarily to French revisions in Marxist theory made in recent years, his analysis relying on the judgments developed earlier in the book. Sometimes he seems too facile, but on the whole this is not obtrusive, and the book is excellent.

Though his sympathy for non-Marxist ideas and attitudes is limited, Lichtheim has a sharp perception of the conflicting strains of the French tradition which entered the Marxist movement, often without being fully recognized by the Marxists themselves. Thus, Blanquist elitism fitted well with Leninism in the formation of the French Communist party, and it contributed to a chronic, grave division between the leadership and the masses in all Marxist parties and trade unions. This division was aggravated by deep-seated proletarian distrust of politicians in general, a distrust further reflected in anarcho-syndicalism, and in the continuing reluctance of trade unions to associate themselves with political parties. In turn, this dis-

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trust was to undermine the revolutionary potential of the Communist party and trade unions.

Proudhonist anarchism reinforced orthodox Marxism's hostility to the bourgeois state, resulting in a paralyzing ambivalence among reformist Socialists about whether to join coalition governments, especially before 1914. This ambivalence seriously weakened them, both within the movement and in the nation.

The reformist wing, as led until 1914 by Jean Jaurès and after him by Léon Blum, incorporated Marxism into traditional French republicanism and idealist moralism, shying away from the prospect of revolutionary violence and trying to make Marxism a way of extending democracy without prior introduction of fundamental structural change. While attempting to reduce class tensions and to make parliamentary democracy a truly popular democracy—and continuing to do so even when, after World War I, parliamentary democracy was not functioning effectively—and moderate socialism was losing its mass support.

Proletarian sentiment remained syndicalist and revolutionary, Lichtheim suggests, although by 1914 syndicalism had collapsed as a political movement because it was unable to accomplish its great revolutionary general strike. Parliamentary reformism did not suit the chiliastic temperament of a trade union rank and file, used to the radical approach of their syndicalist leadership. The Bolshevik Revolution was commonly viewed by revolutionary intellectuals and workers as a true proletarian revolution; thus the support of most of them eventually was transferred to the French Communist party after its formation in 1920. Yet neither workers still anarcho-syndicalist at heart nor undisciplined intellectuals could be confined to the Leninist–Stalinist Party mold. The CP could not become a revolutionary army, and many intellectuals sooner or later left the Party, to develop Marxist thought independently. For most of these apostates, Marxism initially remained an eschatological vision of proletarian conquest of power.

Lichtheim has little use for the Communist party now or in the past, regarding its orthodoxy as sterile and as a revolutionary ideology in a non-revolutionary situation. While Communism can be a substitute for capitalism in pre-industrial areas, he thinks that the objective conditions in advanced Western society have long been quite different from those identified by classical Marxism in constructing its theory of revolution.

Thus the French CP built up its vote before World War II without strengthening its revolutionary potential. The Party was caught up in the paradoxical position of being "an anti-democratic movement forced to pursue democratic policies," particularly in the Popular Front era. In the fluid situation after the Liberation, the Party again had hopes of revolutionary victory, but since 1948 Communism in developed industrial societies has been "irrelevant, save as a permanent opposition movement."

Democratic socialism remained largely moribund during the period 1920–1940; even the Popular Front did not give it vigorous new life. Not only had it lost many of its supporters to the CP, but it failed to recognize what Lichtheim believes were profound

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changes in the economy and society. Revived by the stimulus of the Resistance and the challenge of the postwar reconstruction, "Socialism at long last became synonymous with structural change . . . ceased to be a distant aim and assumed the character of a constructive response to a challenge affecting the whole of society."

Here appear the conclusions of what may best be called "neo-Marxism," compounded in France of humanist philosophy, new economic and sociological science, and selected remnants of classical Marxism. Much of Lichtheim's discussion of neo-Marxism appears to be a presentation of his own ideas, without their being distinguished from those of others. He develops a coherent and compelling series of arguments, but does not regularly associate them with any particular philosophers. Where he does indicate such associations, it most often is in footnotes citing relevant publications. In consequence, his work is not a balanced representation of contemporary currents in French Marxism, but a thesis drawn from these currents.

Lichtheim believes that the lessons of the past demonstrate that the long-sought conquest of political power by the working class is impossible. A new twentieth-century industrial revolution has left control of the means of production in the hands of a technocratic elite, while ordinary capitalists remain privileged but on the sidelines. Since World War II the State has become the directing agency of industrial planning, hardly tolerating the economic liberalism of which it was once the instrument. Society has become a technocracy run by the planners and experts, the managers and engineers.

The bourgeoisie has been displaced, not by the proletariat but by a new class of technical intelligentsia to whose conscious will the toilers are now subject. This is not a secondary or a temporary phenomenon, but a major historical change comparable in importance to the bourgeois revolution itself. In this light classical Marxism should be understood as the theory only of *bourgeois* revolution and the industrial society this revolution produced. The revolutionary formulae which Marxism gave to the workers' movement were based on a past experience of revolution which was hardly germane to the proletarian future, according to Lichtheim.

Marxism, suitably revised, can continue to provide the basic framework for understanding the contemporary world, but its eschatology must, at least in Western society, be abandoned. The new society remains divided and the masses controlled and exploited, but the inherent conflicts cannot be resolved by revolution. Contemporary socialists can work with and upon the technical intelligentsia, employing the insights of revised Marxism to shape the directing of society. Alternatively, they can retain their traditional loyalty to the labor movement while no longer seeking the "conquest of power." Instead, the labor movement could remain in opposition to the technocracy, fighting for its interests within a basically unalterable system. The latter course, while more satisfying to the militant, is rendered dubious by the bucreaucratization of the labor movement itself.

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The disenchantment reflected by Lichtheim is presented more negatively than I think warranted: ". . . Marxist doctrine . . . has turned into the critical contemplation of an eternal and seemingly unchangeable present. . . . the world is not to be made new." Although he does not admit it, what he actually asserts is an end to history. Even though it may not be possible to introduce fundamental and deliberate structural change into the new society and the power structure seems immune to disruption, this end to revolution suggests only that the patterns of future "revolution" are not yet foreseen.

To me the whole concept of technocracy seems too easy, a pat hand drawn from the obvious features of modern society and the readily applicable canons of available doctrines. The web of social relationships is so intricate, and the channels through which power and influence are directed so manifold, that such abstractions as "technocracy" and "power structure," like "bourgeoisie" and "proletariat," are too simplistic to represent the new world adequately. Moreover, the classic notion of necessity in social relationships, inherent in Lichtheim's over-all fatalism and in the technocracy concept itself, does not seem to me justifiable when there are so many opportunities for indeterminate or random connections in this complex web of society. Though persuasive in suggesting why society has not become what Marxism predicted, the technocratic concept is not very useful in comprehending what to expect—or do —next.

ROBERT L. HOFFMAN

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THE TRADITION OF DISSENT (continued from page 628)

and acted on the basis of the realities of corporate power could not understand a colonial world in revolutionary motion. As a result, the various nationalist and socialist movements all seemed to be the creatures of some evil conspiracy located in Moscow. Thus, a kind of McCarthyite view of world politics emerged; and the equation of radicalism with Communism, which so menaced civil liberties within the United States, was projected on a global scale with a devastating effect upon the nation's foreign policy.

Though DISSENT kept up a running criticism of United States foreign policy, the focus of the magazine was increasingly American. For one of the by-products of the rejection of the "finished programs" and talmudic verities of the old faith was to make the magazine productively parochial. In the Thirties, the American Communists had followed the political dictates of the Kremlin with slavish precision. And the socialists and Trotskyists, although free of such a dependence on a distant, totalitarian oracle, were also obsessed by international events. The Socialist party split in the mid-Thirties over a debate which essentially concerned the proper tactics for the Austrian Social Democracy in the struggle against fascism; and Leon Trotsky constantly taught his American followers that the international perspective came first. So it was that radicals in this country sometimes debated the "road to power" without noticing that the workers were out creating the CIO. (In all of this, I am concerned with a sectarian internationalism, and not the real thing; for there is no question that the single most tragic moment in the history of socialism occurred in 1914 when the old promise of world brotherhood was shattered and the revolutionists joined their respective armies and began to kill one another.)

In any case, when DISSENT broke with the facile world-views and began to confront the specific problems of a socialism in crisis, there was a creative discovery of what was wrong with America. It was no longer possible, so to speak, to live off the European socialist inheritance. So it was that the magazine published a ranging series of analyses of the American power structure (including some notable contributions by C. Wright Mills); explored the themes of bureaucracy and alienation long before they became a commonplace of protest rhetoric; and developed a social and economic understanding of the struggle for civil rights. And so it is that this new collection of articles from DISSENT is, if anything weighted in the direction of a confrontation with society in the United States.

If I can return to the personal mode for a moment, there is a curious

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relationship between this "American" aspect of DISSENT and the radical revival of the sixties. Most of the young activists do not think of the magazine as belonging to their generation and movement, and more than one young militant would describe it as irrelevant, old-fogeyish, establishmentarian, or whatever the fashionable put-down might be. And yet, so much of what the new radicals have discovered in a blinding moment of insight comes to them in part, whether they know it or not, as a free gift from the older generation around DISSENT.

In my own case, a great deal of the impulse to turn to the issue of poverty in the United States derived from the critique of the American celebration inaugurated by DISSENT. And would it be impossibly grandpaternalistic for me to speculate, at the age of 38, that some of the angry young Leftists might follow a route similar to my own? They, too, might realize that it is wrong to confuse a tough-minded and empirical willingness to face the society as it is with a lack of principle. Certainly the work of people like Paul Goodman, Bayard Rustin, Tom Kahn, Jeremy Larner, Claude Brown, and the others included in this volume hardly gives aid and comfort to complacency. Indeed, I find such thoughtful essays even more subversive than the most intransigent slogan.

Finally, lest all this have the appearance of a eulogy, let me return to the problematic areas.

It seems to me that one of the most significant failures of American democratic socialists has been with regard to foreign policy. It is not that DISSENT and the rest of us failed to protest this or that outrage, from the glorification of Syngman Rhee to that of General Ky. It is easy enough to join the proper picket line, and the most unimaginative radical can be prepared for almost all eventualities by making an all purpose sign, "Hands Off the — — — — Revolution" (it has the virtue of applying to both Communist and anti-Communist suppressions). But to what precise degree is American foreign policy a reflex of American domestic structure? Must there be a thoroughgoing transformation of the society at home before there can be genuine support for a democratic revolution abroad? Was the failure of the high purpose of the Alliance for Progress an "inevitable" consequence of the nature of the American social system?

DISSENT has not, of course, ignored such issues. Indeed, the magazine has published excellent reportage and analysis in this area. In particular, there was a hard-headed, and quite right, refusal of most of the facile slogans about the "Third World." It would be marvelous if revolutionary *élan* could, by itself, transcend the heritage of backwardness in the ex-colonial world, or if tribesmen and peasants could achieve the society

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which urban workers and intellectuals failed to create. Reality, however, is not so simple and DISSENT has always recognized this tragic, complex fact.

But in a sense, the years between Korea and the escalation of the Vietnam War in the sixties had an ambiguous effect. On the one hand, they permitted radicals—and Negroes and eventually a majority of the society and its politicians—to rediscover and redefine domestic injustice and to begin to do a few things about it. Yet this same mood of detente which permitted a revival of social conscience and consciousness within the society (for such would never have happened under conditions of increasing Cold War) also made the enormous problems of the majority of the people of the world recede into the distance.

Here, I think, is one of the major goads to the democratic Left in the coming period. Inside of America the problem is no longer one of becoming aware of our injustices, but rather of doing something about them other than making speeches, commissioning studies, writing books, and passing inadequate laws. But internationally, from 1914 to this very moment, the Left has essentially failed to develop a political program equal to its ideals and relevant to the world at the same time. Now that political independence has more or less been realized in the colonial revolution, and the infinitely more difficult issues of economic and social development are on the agenda, the challenge is even more acute. Here, I suspect, is DISSENT's intellectual frontier for the second half of the sixties.

Then there is that summary problem which has tormented radicals so much in the recent past and which is dealt with in some of the essays in this book: What of socialism itself?

Here, the autobiographical fragments of this introduction come full circle. In 1954, when I wondered if the editors of DISSENT were on the verge of betrayal, I "knew" precisely and exactly what socialism was: the democratization of the society through the nationalization of the commanding heights of the economy. And indeed, in the largest sense of the term, democratic socialization remains the essence of the socialist vision. But in the intervening years, the question of means has become much more crucial—and problematic. In the old days, reaction was decently straightforward. But now there are corporate Keynesians, anti-egalitarian planners, millionaire welfareists. And there have been nationalizations which have bailed out the most backward businessmen by socializing the losses of the most run-down industries. Under such circumstances, the socialist vocation becomes much more complex and nagging, with

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such seemingly petty issues of social technique as the undramatic stuff of revolution.

Yet there remains a vision, and that is the distinctive thing about DISSENT. For however much intellectual humility has been imposed upon socialists in the past decade, there are certain crucial convictions that remain unaltered, and neither DISSENT nor this writer have changed their mind one whit since 1954. The democratization of concentrated economic, social, and political power is the only hope for the achievement of Western humanist ideals, and this holds true under both capitalism and Communism. Man is not necessarily condemned to inequality and subordination, either in the welfare state or under bureaucratic totalitarianism. And this liberating, democratic possibility of a new order of things in which the people actually decide their own destiny is what makes us rebels and critics.

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